



THE  
Commerce  
OF EXCHANGE  
AND  
War SOCIAL  
ORDER  
IN  
NEIL LATIN  
COFFEE EPIC



## THE COMMERCE OF WAR





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Exchange and Social Order  
in Latin Epic

NEIL COFFEE

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FOR MY MOTHER, LAURETTE,  
AND MY FATHER, MICHAEL

*beneficiorum maxima sunt, quae a parentibus accepimus,  
dum aut nescimus aut nolumus.*

—Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 6.24.2

*Menelaus*: Personally, I never cared much for the girl.  
She wasn't really very much to look at  
At close quarters. Yes, many of us  
Had seen better in Corinth, let alone  
Naucratis . . . what? . . . naturally, pride  
Came into it. The family feud  
Was taken seriously. But most of all  
The Trojan corn monopoly, you understand . . .  
The Bosphorus blockade . . . our Black Sea trade  
Was quite extensive, and a small country  
Like Attica, with no internal resources  
At all, depends to a very large extent  
On imports coming via the Dardanelles.  
It meant something in those days. As to Helen . . .  
Well, she provided a convenient rallying cry.

(Our propagandists did extremely well  
With their material.) But I must point out  
The Trojan War was quite a serious business.

—Miles Burrows, "Economics," *Times Literary Supplement*,  
January 5, 1962



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*debeo enim, cum reddidi, rursus incipere, manetque amicitia.*

—Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 2.18.5

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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Abbreviations of classical references follow S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, eds., 1996, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press).

<i>ACD</i>	<i>Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis</i>
<i>AClass</i>	<i>Acta Classica</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>C&amp;M</i>	<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>G&amp;R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</i>
<i>OLD</i>	P. G. W. Glare, ed. 1962–82. <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford, Oxford University Press.
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>PVS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Virgilian Society</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Revue des études latines</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>





## INTRODUCTION

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The elder Cato, standard-bearer of Roman values and author of a treatise on estate management, was once asked about the most profitable activities of a landowner. He replied:

“bene pascere”; quid secundum: “satis bene pascere”; quid tertium: “male pascere”; quid quartum “arare”; et cum ille, qui quaesierat, dixisset: “quid faenerari?”, tum Cato: “quid hominem,” inquit, “occidere?” (Cic. *Off.* 2.89)

“Raising cattle successfully.” What next to that? “Raising cattle with fair success.” And next? “Raising cattle with but slight success.” And fourth? “Raising crops.” And when his questioner said, “How about money-lending?” Cato replied: “How about murder?”<sup>1</sup>

Cato’s final riposte strikes the modern ear as extreme, yet the underlying sentiment was common enough in Roman society, for which the very modes of economic behavior had ethical value. Above all, engagement in trade raised the suspicions of Roman elites. In the preface to his treatise *On Agriculture*, Cato commends the legal tradition of early Rome for classing the moneylender as a criminal worse than a thief.<sup>2</sup> Cicero cites Cato’s response to the questions on profitability in his own discussion of the propriety of economic activities, where he designates certain kinds of

1. Text and translations of *Off.* are from the Miller 1913 Loeb edition, the latter adapted. All unattributed translations are my own.

2. *maiores nostri sic habuerunt et ita in legibus posuerunt, furem dupli condemnari, feneratorem quadrupli. quanto peiorem ciuem existimarint feneratorem quam furem, hinc licet existimare.*

trade inherently demeaning.<sup>3</sup> Among the various types of workers, Cato calls farmers the least dishonest (*minime male cogitantes*);<sup>4</sup> Cicero finds small-scale trade “foul” (*sordida*), while large-scale trade becomes fully acceptable only as a means to acquire and cultivate land.<sup>5</sup>

The poet Vergil, a contemporary of Cicero and fellow landholder, seems to share these views. Already in his first major poem, the pastoral *Bucolics*, Vergil writes of trade (*merces*, 4.39) as “deception” (*fraus*, 4.31). In his poem on agriculture, the *Georgics*, the ideal farmer neither sells nor trades, but instead leads a prosperous and happy life by avoiding the corruption of the city.<sup>6</sup> When Vergil turns fully toward the weightier matters of war, survival, and Roman identity in his epic *Aeneid*, he does not leave these tawdry matters aside entirely, but conspicuously and selectively deploys the language of commerce in connection with his main characters. Although the poet feels free to recast the legend of Dido, queen of Carthage,<sup>7</sup> and takes pains to distance her from existing stereotypes of Carthaginians,<sup>8</sup> he nevertheless chooses to recount the traditional story of Dido purchasing land for her kingdom:

deuenero locos, ubi nunc ingentia cernes  
moenia surgentemque nouae Karthaginis arcem,  
mercatique solum, facti de nomine Byrsam,  
taurino quantum possent circumdare tergo.  
—(*Aeneid* 1.365–68)

They came to the place where today you will see the huge walls and rising citadel of new Carthage, and bought ground—Byrsa they called it therefrom—as much as they could encompass with a bull’s hide.<sup>9</sup>

This is only one of many references to money in Dido’s story.<sup>10</sup> In the *Aeneid* divinities too are touched by the language of commercial affairs. The

3. *Off.* 2.84 and 1.151, respectively. I discuss both passages further below.

4. Cato *Agr.* Praef.

5. *Off.* 1.151.

6. *Geo.* 2.458–540.

7. Starks 1999, 262–63.

8. Starks 1999. Isaac 2004, 339: “In the tragedy of Dido and Aeneas the former was the victim, the latter fraudulent, and neither behaved in accordance with the stereotypes [of Phoenicians or Easterners]. The ethnic and proto-racist stereotypes found in the work are incidental rather than an integral part of the story.”

9. All *Aeneid* text is that of Mynors; translations are adapted from Goold’s revision of Fairclough’s Loeb edition.

10. Horsfall 1990 writes of the connections between Juno and Dido, noting at p. 135 that

queen of heaven herself, Dido's tutelary goddess, speaks of the "payment" she will extract from Trojans and Latins in return for Aeneas's successes:

non dabitur regnis, esto, prohibere Latinis,  
 atque immota manet fatis Lauinia coniunx:  
 at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus,  
 at licet amborum populos excindere regum.  
 hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum:  
 sanguine Troiano et Rutulo dotabere, uirgo,  
 et Bellona manet te pronuba.  
 —(*Aeneid* 7.313–19)

Not mine will it be—I grant it—to keep him from the crown of Latium, and by fate Lavinia remains immovably his bride; yet to put off the hour and to bring delay to such great issues—that I may do; I may yet uproot the nations of both kings. For such payment in their people's lives may father and son-in-law be united! Blood of Trojan and Rutulian shall be your dowry, maiden, and Bellona awaits you as your bridal matron.

One scholar has written that Juno's word *mercede* has "the aura of business attached to it" and that when Roman poets used such a word, "it was for its mercenary, every-day effect."<sup>11</sup> The views of Cato and Cicero demonstrate that such language would have powerful pejorative connotations for Vergil's audience that this most precise poet could not have overlooked.

Vergil is more than simply aware of this potential, however. The argument of this book is that Vergil's *Aeneid*, Lucan's *Civil War*, and Statius's *Thebaid* represent complex and distinctive responses to the socioeconomic mores of each poet's day. Each draws upon existing conceptions of proper

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"there is a tremendous emphasis on the role of *money* in Dido's story" (emphasis in original). Syed 2005, 143–74, addresses Dido's connection with commerce as well.

11. More fully, Lyne 1987, 52, writes of Juno's word *mercede* that "distribution figures plus consideration of the contexts of its occurrences, and comparisons with the better mannered 'pretium,' point to its being on the prosaic side. It was the word used when one wished to refer in a specific, every-day, mercenary way to wages, or to the price of something. The aura of business attached to it; it was the brother of 'merx'; and naturally, therefore, it occurred more often in prose. Poets preferred to cover much of its ground with, among other words, 'pretium'; when they did use 'merces' it was for its mercenary, every-day effect. Thus Juno. She perceives her vile plan clearly and she states it with blunt clarity: like us, in our business moods." He also notes (p. 59) that the word *merces* seems carefully chosen by Vergil for its prosaic value, inasmuch as it is rare among other poets, particularly those working in more elevated registers.



and improper exchange and consumption in order to shape his characters, as we glimpse Vergil doing here with the figures of Dido and Juno. Socioeconomic ethics are in turn necessarily bound up with conceptions of social order: underneath Cato's hyperbolic comparison of moneylending to murder lies the conviction that certain kinds of economic activity undermine the proper functioning of society, and the corollary that others promote it. Thus, as each poet implicitly condemns or (more rarely) praises exchange and consumption behaviors, he forms a tacit argument for how such patterns of conduct can and should support Roman society.

One approach to this topic would be to analyze it in terms of class competition for resources, including intangible social capital. Competition for resources and status was certainly a conspicuous feature of Roman society as well as the Homeric epic legacy.<sup>12</sup> Scholars have produced valuable studies of economic competition for other genres of Roman poetry demonstrating how poets fashion their works so as to elevate their own status and that of others.<sup>13</sup> Yet such an approach would gain little purchase in imperial Roman epic. Although each poet fills out the dominant narrative of kings and generals with mention of minor figures, the gulf between high- and low-status characters remains unbridgeable. We do not find in the *Aeneid*, *Civil War*, and *Thebaid* either the sort of vertical social mobility that was possible in Roman society or that which is implicit in the *Iliad*, where second-tier fighters such as Glaucus and Sarpedon strive to acquire honor (*timē*) to improve their status.<sup>14</sup> Instead, Vergil, Lucan, and Statius concentrate more narrowly on aristocrats who correspond to Roman elites.

As on the vertical, so on the horizontal social axis: Vergil's nobles do not participate in a robust system of status competition among themselves. Notably absent from the *Aeneid* is a contest for rank and resources comparable to the Iliadic quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles.<sup>15</sup>

12. Roller 2001 analyzes how the Roman elite of the early Empire used reciprocal practices in contesting political power. On status competition in Homer, see, e.g., van Wees 1992, von Reden 1995, and Wagner-Hasel 2000.

13. Bowditch 2001 considers the economic character of Horace's works as part of the poet's attempt to raise his status by freeing himself notionally from dependence upon his patrons. Zeiner 2005 applies Bourdieu's theories in an analysis of Statius's *Silvae*, work extended and complemented by Rühl 2006. These studies are based in part on the considerable work done on economics and status competition in the actual Roman economy, on which see Saller 1982 and Verboven 2002 with references.

14. We find no character of problematic social status like Thersites (Marks 2005).

15. Status does play a part in the competition between Turnus and Drances in *Aen.* 11. I return to this scene in chapter 1.

We learn that Aeneas participates in stripping an enemy of spoils, but Vergil does not present Aeneas in the act of doing so. Nor does Aeneas keep and display spoils to augment his own status,<sup>16</sup> although he remains throughout the poem on a social plane above that of all other mortals.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Lavinia, whose hand is sought by both Aeneas and Turnus, has a minimal role when compared to Homer's Helen. Turnus, as has often been observed, strives in Homeric fashion for Lavinia and for status more generally, but this behavior only leaves him isolated. The competition in the conventional epic games of Book 5 is an exception that proves the rule. The overall lack of social dynamism in the *Aeneid* results from Vergil's choice to make Roman *pietas*, rather than Homeric *timē*, his poem's dominant preoccupation.<sup>18</sup> Rather than increase his personal status, Aeneas strives to fulfill his obligations to gods and mortals. Those characters who do seek to augment their status with goods or honor, such as Euryalus, Camilla, Arruns, and Turnus, are invariably punished for their behavior. In this respect, both Lucan and Statius follow Vergil's example. Each takes his own approach to socioeconomic matters, but neither attempts to return to the economic dynamism of Homer.<sup>19</sup>

16. Aeneas has a companion strip spoils from one opponent (10.541–42) and mounts the arms of Mezentius as a trophy (11.1–16), but he dedicates both to Mars. See Horsfall 2000a, 166–67, 205. His behavior contrasts not only with Homeric precedent, but also with Roman practice, because elite Romans historically took and displayed spoils (Rawson 1990). Flower 1996 surveys such Roman status displays.

17. Even the Greek warrior-king Diomedes is deferential (*Aen.* 11.283–84), although he bested Aeneas in the *Iliad*. Aeneas implicitly contrasts his own refusal to traffic in spoils with the actions of Odysseus and Phoenix, who guard the plunder taken from the Trojans (2.762–63).

18. "La *pietas* è al centro dell'ideologia dell' *Eneide*," Traina 1984a. For an overview of the meaning of *pietas* see this article and Farron 1993, 196–97, who says that "'dutiful (to the traditional gods, to family, to Rome)' is usually, though not always, the word's principal connotation." Further references at Ripoll 1998, 194, 256–57.

19. My interpretation of the relative social dynamism in Homer and Vergil contradicts La Penna 1999, 178–80. He contends that "Homer's primitive democracy seems already to have become a fairly static society" where great houses were established and "there is no sign of the idea that any warrior from the community might, by distinguishing himself through his valour, found a new great household." But the unquestioned dominance of the major figures of the *Iliad* is ensured by the fact that they are the central subjects of an oral tradition that developed around them, as evidenced by the *nostoi*. Given these narrative demands, the poet goes as far as he can toward presenting a socially dynamic warrior culture by demonstrating the strenuous competition for markers of status (the subject of van Wees 1992). Conversely, La Penna argues that figures such as Nisus and Euryalus, who attempt great deeds although they are relatively unknown (unlike their epic models Odysseus and Diomedes), represent the potential for status changes at Rome embodied by the *novus homo* and the Caesarian centurion. Yet he concedes that Euryalus is himself of noble ancestry, descended from Priam (9.284),

Our poets do not abandon this aspect of mimetic vitality for no reason. Critics have long noted the greater moralizing strain in Latin literature as opposed to Greek,<sup>20</sup> and Vergil adds just such a moral dimension when he substitutes *pietas* for *timē*. Homeric *timē* is an index of worth based upon victories and prizes. It is an individual goal, rather than a moral value, in that it does not enjoin restrictions upon the individual for the benefit of others. By contrast, *pietas* requires the individual to treat others in accordance with their social roles.<sup>21</sup> Neither Lucan nor Statius follows Vergil in placing *pietas* at the center of his epic, though moral concerns drive both narratives. Lucan condemns the individual and systemic failures that lead to the destruction of the Republic;<sup>22</sup> Statius meditates upon the use and abuse of autocratic power.<sup>23</sup> Moral urgency takes the place of Homeric status competition by generating concern for the principles, rather than the individuals, that will prevail. Moralism also ties the poems more closely

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and surely there is little opportunity in the *Aeneid* for any lesser warrior to “found a great household” when most of them are scarcely described, none approach the exalted status of Aeneas, and nearly all who strive to elevate their status through Homeric modes of military competition are destroyed.

20. Goldberg 1995, 146–47, sums up this difference: “The world that Roman poets created in epic verse operated by different rules, aroused different feelings, and cultivated a different appeal from its Homeric prototype. Their poems, for example, consistently lack that Homeric sense of tragedy in epic deeds. They are not introspective. Roman epic confirms heroic values without questioning them or making inquiry into their price, because the function of epic itself had changed. . . . They have a story to tell that develops a moral vision, a significance that they read into the events recorded. . . . They created epic, at just the time Roman aristocrats began developing history, not simply to record and extol but to understand the scope and meaning of the Roman achievement. Their deliberate fusion of epic form and historical narrative shifts the function and appeal of epic from tales of individual prowess to the celebration of communal achievements.” Goldberg is writing of Roman historical epic, particularly up to Ennius, and certainly Vergil comes closer to developing a Homeric sense of the tragic than do his Roman epic predecessors, but the greater moral and communal impetus remains part of the Roman epic tradition.

21. “The moral category defined by *pietas* and its opposite, *impietas*, encompasses the duties one owes toward members of one’s family, one’s civic community, and the gods. These different relationships impose differing obligations: the bond between patron and client, for example, involves the exchange of objects and services; the status of citizen may require that one fight alongside other citizens (or, in the case of aristocrats, lead fellow citizens of lower status) on behalf of the state; differing degrees of kinship by blood or marriage are accompanied by differing social expectations; and religion, both in the public and domestic spheres, involves ritually prescribed exchanges between humans and divinities. The category *pietas*, then, embraces a range of social behaviors that collectively provide a complex internal structure to the community, binding people more or less closely together within and among kinship groups, connecting them between social strata, and linking them to the divinities.” Roller 2001, 26–27. Cf. Galinsky 1996, 86–88.

22. Roller 2001, 54–63.

23. The subject of Dominik 1994.

to the ideology current in each poet's society, because the normative vision of the poet calls for comparison with the audience's own values.<sup>24</sup>

### Roman Economic Morality

In order to understand the basis of the socioeconomic language and concepts of our poets, then, we must examine the moral components of Roman economic ideology.<sup>25</sup> Greco-Roman societies never defined or systematized the field of economics as they did the relatively advanced disciplines of geometry or philosophy.<sup>26</sup> Elite Romans were, however, well versed in the details of finance necessary for business transactions. Horace complains of the dull lessons given to Roman children: while the Greek student was learning the arts of speech, his Roman counterpart was dividing the value of coins into a hundred parts by long calculations.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, discussions of the morality, rather than the practice, of economic matters predominate in the extant sources.

A system of economic morality necessarily involves censure for spending too much on the wrong things and too little on the right.<sup>28</sup> At Rome, such disapprobation already finds full expression in the comedies of Plautus, populated by such stock characters as the wastrel soldier (spending too much) and the greedy pimp willing to inflict great harm on others in order to protect his profits (spending too little).<sup>29</sup> Numerous Roman authors of our period inveigh against prodigality and luxury, including Sallust, Livy,

24. Roller 2001, 20–29, offers an overview of some central values of Roman elite ideology, particularly as they pertain to Lucan.

25. For work that explores Greek economic ideology and its cultural expressions, see Kurke 1991 and Kurke 1999. Cartledge 1998, 30, citing Morris 1994, 351, writes that “[Kurke’s] approach consciously reflects the turn of the so-called ‘new cultural history’ towards what have been described as ‘agent-centered issues of meaning, treating “the economic” as a category of representation, a field of negotiations for knowledgeable actors in pursuit of their goals.’” Bowditch 2001 and Roller 2001 give accounts of aspects of Roman economic morality. For a survey of approaches to exchange in antiquity, see Wagner-Hasel 2000, 27–59.

26. Finley 1999, 1–22, with the qualifications of Meikle 1998, esp. pp. 238, 244–50, and Meikle 1995, 252 n. 7.

27. *Ep.* 2.3.325–30.

28. “Examples of ‘inappropriate’ consumption—too much, too little, the wrong sort of thing in the wrong way at the wrong time with the wrong people—were offered in law courts and debating chambers as irrefutable evidence of the character flaws and suspect motives of political opponents” (Morley 2007, 37). In the legal realm, such concerns could take the form of sumptuary laws, attested from the earliest recorded Roman history (Daube 1969, 117–28).

29. Examples of such characters can be found in the *Miles Gloriosus*, *Pseudolus*, and *Rudens*.

Horace, and Seneca.<sup>30</sup> Prodigality comes in for greater criticism than stinginess possibly because it was more conspicuous, but also no doubt because social incentives, together with Rome's accumulated wealth, made it the much more prevalent vice among Roman elites.<sup>31</sup> Members of the aristocracy in first century CE could not hope to obtain high political position without lavish spending; at all periods they were expected to demonstrate a liberality that could easily become, or be construed as, prodigality.<sup>32</sup>

Although stinginess received less attention than prodigality, it was still considered a vice. Horace describes how a rich moneylender, lest he be considered prodigal, continues to charge an exorbitant rate for loans and squeezes his insolvent debtors:

Fufidius uappae famam timet ac nebulonis  
diues agris, diues positus in faenore nummis.  
quinas hic capiti mercedes exsecat atque  
quanto perditio quisque est, tanto acrius urget.  
—(Sat. 1.2.12–15)

Fufidius, rich in lands, rich in moneys laid out at usury, fears the repute of a worthless prodigal; five times the interest he slices away from the principal, and the nearer a man is to ruin, the harder he presses him.<sup>33</sup>

Horace's point is that fools avoiding one extreme go to the other (*dum uitant stulti uitia, in contraria currunt*, 1.2.24). Here as elsewhere stinginess, or the desire to hoard one's own goods, goes hand in hand with greed, or the desire to get more from others.<sup>34</sup>

Horace's attention to these vices is rooted in the socioeconomic position and concerns of the Roman elite. For them, there were essentially two sources of wealth apart from inheritance: agricultural estate production and commercial profit. Senators tended to shun association with com-

30. See Edwards 1993, 173–206.

31. And, as Edwards 1993, 24, observes, elites directed moral opprobrium primarily against members of their own class.

32. See Edwards 1993, 202, who cites Hor. Sat. 1.2.4–11 and Sen. Ep. 120.8.

33. All Horace citations are from the 1995 Shackleton Bailey Teubner edition. Translations are from the Fairclough Loeb edition.

34. In a satire dedicated to excoriating greed, Horace asks his fictional addressee how much it would really “reduce his capital” if he should use somewhat better oil for eating and washing: *quantulum enim summae curtabit quisque dierum, / unguere si caules oleo meliore caputque / coeperis in pexa foedum porrigine?* Sat. 2.3.124–26. Cf. Pliny Ep. 2.6.1–2.

merce as undignified, attempting instead to actually, or apparently, live off their landed estates.<sup>35</sup> This prejudice influenced *equites* and other social aspirants, though they did not habitually conduct their transactions through agents as senators did.<sup>36</sup> Elite disdain for trade was founded upon the recognition that the volatility of gains from earned wealth could produce rapid changes in social status disruptive to the upper orders.<sup>37</sup> There was, in addition, an abiding belief that upper-class males should devote their time to public affairs, leaving no time for commerce.<sup>38</sup> Those who deviated from this ideology by engaging in trade too openly were seen as motivated by meanness and greed.<sup>39</sup>

In place of trade, which threatened socioeconomic disruption, Roman elites preferred to conduct their affairs through the exchange of gifts and favors. That is, they implicitly recognized a distinction theorized in the modern era between reciprocal and commodity exchanges.<sup>40</sup> Reciprocity is distinguished from commodity exchange by its gratuitousness: unlike in a commodity transaction, the giver of a gift or favor grants more than necessary for an equal exchange.<sup>41</sup> Parties to a commodity transaction, on

35. D'Arms 1981, 46, refers to this as an opposition between "traditional values" and "actual conduct." Syme 1960, 151, writes that Roman elites viewed wealth from trade as "sordid and degrading." Morley 2007, 83: "the elite disdain for 'trade' was almost absolute." Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1991. Perelli 1990, 179–209, contends that in the course of the last two centuries of the Republic, mercantile, financial, contract labor, and monetary activities were accorded greater status (see esp. p. 182), but he does not deny that aristocratic prejudice existed. Indeed, some of his evidence seems to make this point emphatically. He argues, for example, that Livy projects his own attitudes onto the late third century when he writes that the aristocracy found all forms of earned wealth distasteful (*quaestus omnis patribus indecorus uisus*, 21.63; Perelli 1990, 185), but this would mean that Livy himself and his contemporaries held such attitudes.

36. D'Arms 1981, 48–71.

37. "The flow of money, . . . a major determinant of social status, out of the coffers of some and into the coffers of others, always threatened to subvert [the] illusion of stability" (Edwards 1993, 186). Habinek 1998, 136, makes a similar observation. Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.9: *nec uero ulla res magis labefactatam diu et Carthaginem et Corinthum peruertit aliquando, quam hic error ac dissipatio ciuium, quod mercandi cupiditate et nauigandi et agrorum et armorum cultum reliquerant.*

38. Sall. *Cat.* 3 is a classic formulation of these priorities. See Cossarini 1979–80.

39. Thus Horace condemns a man who spends his whole day trading merchandise in order to increase his wealth: *hic mutat merces surgente a sole ad eum quo / uespertina tepet regio, quin per mala praeceps / fertur uti pulvis collectus turbine, ne quid / summa deperdat metuens aut ampliet ut rem.* *Sat.* 1.4.29–32.

40. Griffin 2003a, 100, gives a similar, though more detailed summary of this distinction. I follow von Reden 1995, 18, in using the term "commodity exchange" for what Griffin refers to as "economic exchange."

41. This is the definition of van Wees 1998, 20, who writes that "gifts and favours are gratuitous in that they are thought of as generously going beyond what is required, while the only injuries that demand retaliation are by definition those felt to have been inflicted

the other hand, reckon values carefully, leaving no debt or obligation. Participants in a reciprocal exchange also expect a return, but rather than perform exact and immediate calculations, they look for a general sense of equity over the course of multiple transactions.<sup>42</sup> Reciprocal exchanges thus create an ongoing relationship that commodity transactions in and of themselves do not.<sup>43</sup>

The distinction between reciprocal and commodity exchanges was basic to Roman society and will be fundamental to this study as well. Several aspects of reciprocity discussed by contemporary scholars will not figure substantially into my discussion, however, because they are of limited relevance to the epic poems under consideration. First, some scholars would identify the exchange of gifts and favors discussed so far as “positive reciprocity,” to be contrasted with gratuitous harm leading to cycles of retaliation, or “negative reciprocity.”<sup>44</sup> I agree with those who see cycles of retaliation as a phenomenon structurally distinct from the exchange

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gratuitously.” Verboven 2002, 20, adds that “in a sense, reciprocity relations can be conceived as a form of capital into which one has to invest to reap (uncertain) benefits. The problem is, however, that neither the investment nor the total profit can be calculated in monetary terms because they consist of an inseparable variety of goods and services, to many of which (as, for example, promises of solidarity and loyalty) a clear monetary value cannot possibly be ascribed. Therefore, although reciprocity relations may generate substantial benefits and although both partners in the relationship may anticipate these benefits and want to continue the relationship because of the anticipated benefits, the relations themselves cannot be expressed in monetary terms.” Mauss 1925 is the earliest full theoretical treatment of the distinction between reciprocal and commodity exchange. More recent anthropological discussions of the concept include Sahlins 1968, Sahlins 1972, Weiner 1992, and Godelier 1999. For discussions of reciprocity in the context of Greek studies, see Donlan 1982, Beidelman 1989, Seaford 1994, von Reden 1995, Brown 1998, Wagner-Hasel 2000, and Seaford 2004. Roller 2001, 129–34, surveys work on reciprocity by anthropologists and classicists, and Verboven 2002 extends this work to give a full account of how Roman elites reconciled their preference for reciprocity with their actual involvements in commercial affairs.

42. Sahlins 1972, 193–95, further distinguishes “balanced” reciprocity from “generalized” reciprocity, with the former signifying a situation where the parties are relatively attentive to the value they are receiving in return, and the latter something closer to altruism. Most of the interactions I will consider are closer to balanced reciprocity. For the sake of simplicity, and because I will be examining the dynamics of individual exchanges in detail anyway, I refer to this whole spectrum simply as “reciprocity.”

43. Sen. Ben. 2.18.5 notes how friendship (*amicitia*) arises from the exchange of gifts and favors. On such bonds see Verboven 2002, 38. This is not to say that an ongoing relationship cannot arise from commodity exchanges; in such cases it is not, strictly speaking, the exchange that creates the relationship, but other parts of the interaction. It is also true, though, that a commodity exchange may involve trust, which binds the parties together, but the exchange of trust would then be by definition reciprocal.

44. E.g., Seaford 1998, 1: “Reciprocity is the principle and practice of voluntary requital, of benefit for benefit (positive reciprocity) or harm for harm (negative reciprocity).”

of gifts and favors, because parties to harmful exchanges do not intend to establish an ongoing exchange relationship, but would ordinarily prefer to inflict injury at a level that would prevent reprisal.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the Roman sources that discuss systems of gifts and favors at length, to whom I will turn presently, do not associate them with retaliation.

When our epic poets speak of the infliction of harm in economic terms, they typically represent it as commodity rather than reciprocal exchange, as in Juno's declaration that she would extract "payment" (*mercede*) for the victory of Aeneas. The association between punishment and payment has a long history in antiquity, embedded in Greek words like *tisis*, which forms part of the name of Statius's bloodthirsty Fury Tisiphone, the one who "avenges or repays slaughter." In the *Aeneid*, *Civil War*, and *Thebaid*, commodity expressions for punishment resonate with other commodity language, so that descriptions of punishment become part of larger systems of socioeconomic signification.

The second point of clarification involves the question of social status. Reciprocity played a central role in relations between superiors and inferiors in Roman society, whether or not these relations fell into the category of patronage.<sup>46</sup> Vergil, Lucan, and Statius were necessarily involved in a web of relationships with individuals of superior and of inferior status.<sup>47</sup> However, because their epics focus mainly on relations between aristocratic leaders, to the exclusion of those with the lower ranks of society,<sup>48</sup> negotiations between status levels are largely absent.

To be sure, other groups that Roman society generally excluded from political power, in particular women and foreigners, are integral to the fabric of these epics. Both, however, play marginal roles in the exchange

45. Van Wees 1998, 20–24.

46. See Wallace-Hadrill 1989 and Saller 1982, with further references. Nauta 2002 discusses the nature of Roman patronage in his analysis of the social status of the Flavian poets.

47. In the cases of Vergil and Statius, what we might consider artistic patronage was often figured as "friendship" (*amicitia*). Lucan's status placed him at the apex of Roman society, ranking not far below the *princeps*. On the relationships of poets to their sponsors, see Gold 1982 and White 2005, 325–27 (with references). Bowditch 2001 takes a biographical approach to exchange in Horace, relating the treatment of exchange practices in his poetry to his own social self-positioning. I focus on the relationship between poem, rather than poet, and society because we need not interpret the poem as mediated by the poet, and because we lack reliable evidence for the lives of Lucan and Vergil (on the latter, see Horsfall 2000a, 1–25). Nauta 2002 has examined the role of patronage in the *Silvae*, where Statius reveals something about his life. I discuss the relationship between Statius's social position and his epic in chapter 5, but here too my focus is on the relationship between his epic and Roman society.

48. These clearly do not meet the condition of "asymmetry" set out by Saller 1982, 1, for patronage relationships. One exception to this rule is relationship between generals and soldiers in the *Civil War*, which I address in chapter 4.



relations of the poems that reflect their disenfranchisement in Rome. Keith has written that the role of women in Latin epic reflects a broader conceptual opposition in Roman society between feminized nature and masculine culture, and that epic in turn works to legitimize the exclusion of women from power.<sup>49</sup> This underlying dynamic informs the roles in socioeconomic relationships that Vergil, Lucan, and Statius give to women: the poets generally deny their female characters the agency necessary to participate in the dominant forms of public exchange. Women, such as Vergil's Andromache, do participate in minor gift-giving but, as in the case of Lavinia, are also treated as objects of exchange when given as wives to cement alliances. Lavinia, who never speaks a word in the *Aeneid*, participates in the narrative considerably less than Helen, her counterpart in the *Iliad*. More often women's efforts at public forms of exchange misfire, as is the case with Dido. Instead, they find a productive sphere for giving and receiving within the family, an important theme of *Thebaid* Book 12. Women are subject to reproach for their habits of consumption, such as when Vergil's warrior-maiden Camilla is charged with pursuing a victim out of a "feminine love for booty and spoils" (*femineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore*, 11.782), yet this criticism is undermined by similar behavior on the part of male heroes.<sup>50</sup>

Just as women deviate from aristocratic standards for economic behavior, so too do members of ethnicities other than the Greeks and Romans that constitute the Roman epic norm—Asians, Carthaginians, and Egyptians. Most often, the poets make these ethnic groups into cautionary examples of depravity. Thus Lucan has the Egyptian court minister Pothinus articulate a rejection of reciprocity (8.484–535) that stands in perfect antithesis to Cicero's *On Duties*. When such deviance comes to constitute the norm, however, the sole true practitioners of the ordinary Roman values may indeed be foreigners. In Lucan's epic, members of the African tribe of the Psylli offer the only *hospitium* to be found when they stand guard for foreign travelers against noxious animals (*excubat hospitibus*, 9.910–11). The disparaging representation of other ethnic groups naturally forms part of an implicit argument for Roman superiority and justification for domination and hegemony.<sup>51</sup>

If women and foreigners were generally deemed incapable of acting with full agency in exchange and consumption, Roman elites had the

49. Keith 2000, 63–64.

50. Keith 2000, 28–31.

51. Isaac 2004, 304–5.

full range of choices and thus were required to make ethical decisions for which ideology provided consistent guidelines. Before turning to the exposition of these ethics by Cicero and Seneca, however, we must begin by considering what status we should afford such an ideology and how we should incorporate this understanding into our reading of epic poetry. Žižek writes that

ideology is not simply a “false consciousness,” an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as “ideological”—“ideological” *is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence . . . “ideological” is not the “false consciousness” of a social being but this being in so far as it is supported by “false consciousness.”* (Emphasis in original)<sup>52</sup>

According to Žižek’s definition, ideology is a conceptual filter, inseparable from the subject’s consciousness, through which he or she views the world. My definition for the purposes of this study will be more restrictive: I will use ideology to mean a set of beliefs indicated by the normative statements of Roman elites.<sup>53</sup> Such statements demonstrate an awareness of beliefs beyond that allowed by Žižek, even if their authors may be ignorant of the deeper foundations of their thought. It is this self-awareness that leads Morley to call for an understanding of economic ideology that does not entirely merge subject and viewpoint, but allows for a reflexive relationship between ideology and practice: “We need to develop a view of economic ideology as an inexact and often self-serving image of reality that could nevertheless influence and constrain the actions of individuals as if it were real.”<sup>54</sup> Epic poems are in themselves normative statements no less than treatises on socioeconomic matters. As Raaflaub writes,

Wherever the epic evidence is substantial enough, the depiction of social structures, conditions, and interactions proves sufficiently consis-

52. Žižek 1989, 21, quoted in Hawkes 2003, 169.

53. Shell 1978 and Shell 1982, followed by Kurke 1999 and Seaford 2004, explore the homology between language and money as signifiers, and the potential for changes in ideology and social relations to which the advent of money gives rise. I generally limit myself to concerns articulated explicitly by Roman contemporaries of the poets in an attempt to approach their cultural horizons more closely.

54. Morley 2007, 84.

tent to reflect a historical society—despite archaisms, anachronisms, exaggerations, and occasional contradictions that help create a heroic aura and are traits or remnants of composition in performance . . . heroic myth thus became an instrument of ethical, social, and political reflection and offered a timeless and continually valid repertoire which enabled the poets to weave contemporary concerns into the epic action, to illuminate and educate their audiences.<sup>55</sup>

The central part of this project is thus a synchronic comparison of two ideological products. I examine how three epic poets implicitly incorporate, respond to, and make poetic use of the beliefs about socioeconomic behavior that other writers make (more) explicit.<sup>56</sup> But it is also necessary to set these critiques in a diachronic context in order to understand both the social norms the poets take as material and their artistic responses. For this reason I will examine the socioeconomic discourse of the poems against the historical circumstances of their authors: the aftermath of the Roman civil war, the rise of Caesarism, and the changing mores of the early Empire.

Two witnesses, Cicero and Seneca, will help us expand our view of Roman economic ideology further and thus provide a basis for considering its expression in epic. In *On Duties*, Cicero presents prescriptions to his fellow aristocrats for ethical and appropriate behavior, organized around the dichotomy of the honorable (*honestum*) versus the useful (*utile*). Cicero borrows his material from the Stoic philosopher Panaetius and other sources but nonetheless articulates fully Roman values.<sup>57</sup> To create a consistent basis for investigating the socioeconomic discourses of our epic poems, I propose to organize the different possibilities for proper and improper economic behavior offered by Cicero around a scheme of four recognized Roman types of economic actors. These are two positive types along with the two negative types criticized by Horace: the generous man, the thrifty man, the prodigal, and the merchant. Each type represents a

55. Raaflaub 2005, 69.

56. The poets will clearly have little to say in detail about the various kinds of economic activities in which a member of the Roman elite might have engaged, the social status implications of each, and how these circumstances changed in different periods, the subjects of Gabba 1980 and D'Arms 1981.

57. See Dyck 1996, 17–28, 335 ad 1.150. Panaetius had himself espoused a form of Stoicism adapted to the traditions of the Roman aristocracy, in part by focusing more on the individual striving toward greater virtue than the Stoic sage (Gill 1994, 4605).

known pattern of behavior with a given moral valence. Together these types account for the range of ideological positions on economic behavior, as further examination of *On Duties* will demonstrate.<sup>58</sup>

To begin with, the man who is generous, or *liberalis*, represented the Roman aristocratic ideal. As Verboven writes, "A notable was primarily a homo liberalis and by the time of the Late Republic this implied first and foremost showing generosity."<sup>59</sup> Cicero attributes to human beings an inherent inclination to generosity and ranks *liberalitas* next to *iustitia* as qualities that contribute to stable communities.<sup>60</sup> The benefit to society of such generosity is clear:

sed quoniam, ut praeclare scriptum est a Platone, non nobis solum nati sumus ortusque nostri partem patria vindicat, partem amici, atque, ut placet Stoicis, quae in terris gignantur, ad usum hominum omnia creari, homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se aliis alii prodesse possent, in hoc naturam debemus ducem sequi, communes utilitates in medium adferre, mutatione officiorum, dando accipiendo, tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus deuincire hominum inter homines societatem. (Cic. *Off.* 1.22)

But since, as Plato has admirably expressed it, we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country claims a share of our being, and our friends a share; and since, as the Stoics hold, everything that the earth produces is created for man's use; and as men, too, are born for the sake of men, that they may be able mutually to help one another; in this direction we ought to follow nature as our guide, to contribute to the general good by an interchange of acts of kindness, by giving and receiving, and thus by our skill, our industry, and our talents to cement human society more closely together, man to man.

58. In taking this approach, I am following the suggestion of La Penna 1999, 180, who advocates interpreting the *Aeneid* in light of historical circumstances by "seeking in characters and events in the poem references to types and tendencies of contemporary society" rather than through allegory and symbolism. Although I agree with La Penna's goal, I come to different conclusions, as discussed above. Lowrie 2001, 37, similarly calls for the reading of Latin literature through its contemporary cultural context.

59. Verboven 2002, 100.

60. Cicero assumes an inclination to generosity in his discussion of the limits of beneficence, *Off.* 1.43–44. The qualities of *iustitia* and *liberalitas* are listed at *Off.* 1.20 as contributing to an unnamed virtue, later designated at 1.153 as *communitas*. See Dyck 1996 ad 1.20–60 and further references at Verboven 2002, 35 n. 2.

Cicero stresses elsewhere as well the strong bonds that arise from mutual giving and receiving:

magna etiam illa communitas est, quae conficitur ex beneficiis ultro et citro datis acceptis, quae et mutua et grata dum sunt, inter quos ea sunt, firma deuinciuntur societate. (Cic. *Off.* 1.56)

Another strong bond of fellowship is effected by mutual interchange of kind services; and as long as these kindnesses are mutual and acceptable, those between whom they are interchanged are united by the ties of an enduring intimacy.

Cicero praises hospitality (*hospitalitas*) as a related practice in the same discussion,<sup>61</sup> indicating that this and other modes of reciprocity should be habitual for the generous man, because they bind members of a society more closely together in concord. Cicero's call for political unity (*concordia ordinum*)<sup>62</sup> suggests how this cohesive effect would function with respect to the social orders. Reciprocal ties among elites would strengthen their collective position for dealing with the plebs, while, reciprocal ties between classes (i.e., patronage) would keep Roman society vertically integrated.<sup>63</sup> To use the language of modern anthropology, Cicero takes a functionalist approach to exchange, considering how it contributes to the cohesion and stability of society. Because the goal of this study is to analyze Roman poetry in terms of Roman conceptions, I will follow Cicero's functionalist orientation.<sup>64</sup>

61. *Off.* 1.64.

62. Cicero sometimes uses this phrase to refer only to senators and *equites*, but at other times, as in his handling of the Catilinarian crisis (*Cat.* 4.14–16), he uses it to refer to all the social orders.

63. "The ideology of 'good gain' served to constrain the actions of individuals, up to a point; it thus served, in part, to reinforce the authority of the elite as a whole. The expectation that true aristocrats should not be too concerned about profit, for example, helped to enhance their social status and claim to power in a society where wealth could be seen as a source of disruption" (Morley 2007, 85). Saller 2000, 838, writes that "in the view of the Romans themselves, exchange relationships were the glue that held society together." Cf. Wistrand 1979, 11. See Inwood 1995, 241, for Greek philosophers on the cohesive power of the exchange of benefits. Verboven 2002, 342 n. 2, gives further references to the creation of trust and solidarity as the main social function of reciprocal relations. We can compare Cicero's view of the generous man with that of Aristotle, who says that the generous man uses money best (*Eth. Nic.* 4.31 1120a).

64. Griffin 2003a, 101 n. 61, notes the functionalist approaches of both Cicero and Seneca and the contrast between conflict theory, which takes the perspective of the goal-seeking individual, and interactionism, which focuses on the interface between the individual and society.

The man who takes the principle of reciprocal beneficence too far, however, becomes the sort of prodigal portrayed by Horace:

omnino duo sunt genera largorum, quorum alteri prodigi, alteri liberales: prodigi, qui epulis et uiscerationibus et gladiatorum muneribus ludorum uenationumque apparatu pecunias profundunt in eas res, quarum memoriam aut breuem aut nullam omnino sint relicturi, liberales autem, qui suis facultatibus aut captos a praedonibus redimunt, aut aes alienum suscipiunt amicorum aut in filiarum collocatione adiuuant aut opitulantur in re uel quaerenda uel augenda. (Cic. *Off.* 2.55–56)

There are, in general, two classes of those who give largely: the one class is the lavish, the other the generous. The lavish are those who squander their money on public banquets, doles of meat among the people, gladiatorial shows, magnificent games, and wild-beast fights—vanities of which but a brief recollection will remain, or none at all. The generous, on the other hand, are those who employ their own means to ransom captives from brigands, or who assume their friends' debts or help in providing dowries for their daughters, or assist them in acquiring property or increasing what they have.

The generous man differs from the prodigal in that he gives to more worthy recipients, but behind this difference in kind lies a difference in degree. Both types act in accordance with the notion of gratuitous giving that is fundamental to reciprocal exchanges, but the prodigal does not moderate this impulse and so takes gratuitousness too far, giving beyond the bounds of sustainable reciprocal ties with his peers, which results in ruined households and even the sort of massive debt that drove Catiline's attempt to overthrow the Roman state.<sup>65</sup>

In opposition to these two types who practice reciprocity, Cicero presents two who deal in commodity exchange. He declares that the good man should avoid the professions of tax collecting and usury, because they incur ill-will, as well as the practice of buying goods from wholesale merchants in order to retail them immediately, because no one can get profits this way without habitually lying.<sup>66</sup> Cicero later poses a rhetorical

65. *Off.* 2.84.

66. *primum improbantur ii quaestus, qui in odia hominum incurrunt, ut portitorum, ut feneratorum. illiberales autem et sordidi quaestus mercennariorum omnium, quorum operae, non quorum artes emuntur; est enim in illis ipsa merces auctoramentum seruitutis. sordidi*

question—Who does not know what it means to deceive for a profit, and what kind of person does this?—then lists the attributes of such a person:

neque enim id est celare, quicquid reticeas, sed cum, quod tu scias, id ignorare emolumenti tui causa uelis eos, quorum intersit id scire. hoc autem celandi genus quale sit et cuius hominis, quis non uidet? certe non aperti, non simplicis, non ingenui, non iusti, non uiri boni, uersuti potius, obscuri, astuti, fallacis, malitiosi, callidi, ueteratoris, uafri. (*Off.* 3.57)

The fact is that merely holding one's peace about a thing does not constitute concealment, but concealment consists in trying for your own profit to keep others from finding out something that you know, when it is for their interest to know it. And who fails to discern what manner of concealment that is and what sort of person would be guilty of it? At all events he would be no candid or sincere or straightforward or upright or honest man, but rather one who is shift, sly, artful, shrewd, underhand, cunning, one grown old in fraud and subtlety.

In these passages Cicero is touching on the stereotypical Roman conception of the merchant, one early Roman version of which is the comic pimp, who has all the negative characteristics Cicero details here.<sup>67</sup> Cicero makes use of this type in his published speeches as well: he repeatedly describes the gifts and favors of Antony in commercial terms.<sup>68</sup> Horace presents similar figures, including the *faenerator* Alfius of *Epode* 2, who himself ironically condemns involvement in money lending. Cicero could subsume all involvement in commerce under the general concept of *negotium gerere*;<sup>69</sup> I will likewise the words “merchant” and “mercantile” broadly, because we find the characteristics Cicero lists here associated

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*etiam putandi, qui mercantur a mercatoribus, quod statim uendant; nihil enim proficiant, nisi admodum mentiantur; nec uero est quicquam turpius uanitate. Off.* 1.150.

67. Labrax, the pimp in Plautus's *Rudens*, is typical. He is driven to insist upon the terms of his contracts by a rapacious and seemingly insatiable desire for profits, all the while discounting any social obligations that might stand in the way of his satisfaction. See Way 1998, 208–10, 212. The best-known later literary manifestation of the merchant is Shakespeare's Shylock, but the figure recurs throughout Western literature. One particularly robust portrait is the character of Simone in Oscar Wilde's *A Florentine Tragedy: A Fragment*.

68. Ramsey 2003, 169.

69. D'Arms 1981, 26. Men of commerce of course had their own hierarchies, which, for example, relegated itinerant traders to a lower status than *mercatores* or *negotiatores* (Colin 2000).

with *mercatores*, *negotiatores* (*mercis sordidae negotiator*, Quint. *Inst.* 1.12.17), *faeneratores*, and other men of commerce.

Cicero's description suggests that the merchant yields to his appetites in trying to extract more profit than is honorable or useful to society but nevertheless demonstrates cleverness (*astuti*, *fallacis*, *callidi*, . . . *uafri*) in his profit seeking. The charge of shrewdness shows that Cicero objects to the mere fact of a carefully calculated commodity exchange; such an accusation of sly dealing would be impossible in a truly reciprocal exchange, where both sides recognize gratuitous giving. By implication, the fundamental objection to such commodity exchange is that it has the opposite effect of reciprocal exchange: whereas reciprocity builds the ties that bind the community together, the commodity exchange of the merchant undermines those ties and sows discord by destroying the trust, or *fides*, upon which such ties are based.<sup>70</sup>

Although a full condemnation of mercantile behavior is implicit in Cicero's critique, he stops short of naming the type of individual he describes in *On Duties* 3.57 with so many pejorative adjectives. His most explicit statement on the propriety of involvement in commerce helps to explain this reticence:

mercatura autem, si tenuis est, sordida putanda est; sin magna et copiosa, multa undique apportans multisque sine uanitate inperitiens, non est admodum uituperanda; atque etiam si satiata quaestu uel contenta potius, ut saepe ex alto in portum, ex ipso se portu in agros possessionesque contulit, uidetur iure optimo posse laudari. omnium autem rerum, ex quibus aliquid acquiritur, nihil est agri cultura melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil homine libero dignius. (*Off.* 1.151)

Trade, if it is on a small scale, is to be considered vulgar; but if wholesale and on a large scale, importing large quantities from all parts of the world and distributing to many without misrepresentation, it is not to be greatly disparaged. Rather, it even seems to deserve the highest respect, if those who are engaged in it, satiated, or rather, I should say, satisfied with the fortunes they have made, make their way from

70. Cf. Sen. *Controu.* 2.6.2, which makes the pursuit of gain the root of social discord: *noli pecuniam concupiscere. quid tibi dicam? haec est quae auget discordiam urbis et terrarum orbem in bellum agit, humanum genus cognatum natura in fraudes et scelerum et mutuum odium instigat*. Cicero says that the good man will even reckon his accounts in such a way as to avoid any suspicion of illiberality or greed (*ut illiberalitatis auaritiaque absit suspicio*, *Off.* 2.64).



the port to a country estate, as they have often made it from the sea into port. But of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a free man.

Cicero's judgments seesaw curiously: small-scale trade is to be despised; large-scale trade is not wholly condemnable; better, though, if one withdraws from it after gaining enough to procure an estate; and farming is anyway the best and most honorable source of income. Clearly, Cicero prefers agriculture over commerce as a source of noble wealth,<sup>71</sup> but in his effort to unite senators and *equites* he must accommodate the fact that so many members of both orders were deeply involved in trade.<sup>72</sup> Yet in his thinking and among men of his class, the long-standing bias toward agriculture and against trade, embodied in the figure of the merchant, remained ideologically dominant.<sup>73</sup>

Cicero's treatise *On Laws* further illustrates how an opposition between liberality and mercenary behavior is a fixture of Roman thought:

quid? liberalitas gratuitane est an mercennaria? si sine praemio benigna est, gratuita, si cum mercede, conducta; nec est dubium, quin is, qui liberalis benignusue dicitur, officium, non fructum, sequatur; ergo item iustitia nihil expetit praemii, nihil pretii, per se igitur expetitur. (*Leg.* 1.48)

What then? Is liberality given freely, or to be sold? If it is to be given generously and without a price, it must be given freely. If liberality is

71. In addition to the references above, see Dyck 1996 ad 1.150–51, p. 337.

72. D'Arms 1981, 23–24, cites this passage to demonstrate that Cicero's bias was only against petty trade, but, as discussed above, he also acknowledges a general elite ideological bias against commerce. On pp. 38–39, D'Arms analyzes a similar tension between condemnation and approval of trade to that seen here in *Cic. Rep.* 2.9. Verboven 2002, 32, and passim demonstrates how Roman elites used ostensibly reciprocal “friendship” (*amicitia*) relations to engage in business transactions with businessmen (*negotiatores*) and bankers (*faeneratores*). Morley 2000 looks at this issue in the context of the agricultural sales of great estates. Morley concludes that the owners of these estates preferred to sell to wholesalers on their premises rather than bring their goods to market in order to “keep the sordid business of buying and selling at a distance” (218) and simultaneously create reciprocal “ties of dependence and obligation” (219) with the merchants who bought from them.

73. On this passage from *Off.*, with further references to traditional Roman distaste for trade and bias toward agriculture as means of generating income, see Dyck 1996, ad 1.150–51, pp. 331–38.

given with expectation of reward, then it is bought. It is certain that someone who is said to be liberal and generous seeks to carry out a duty rather than earn a profit. Therefore justice too demands no reward or price, but is sought for its own sake.

Selling appears as a shabby thing next to liberality, which Cicero compares to justice itself.

From Cicero's disparagement of mercantile behavior, we might conclude that Roman aristocratic ideology held all forms of commodity exchange under suspicion as necessarily devious and fraudulent. But as it did with reciprocal exchange, Roman thought characterized commodity exchange with both positive and negative types. In opposition to the merchant stood the figure of the thrifty man, best exemplified by the elder Cato. His thrift was proverbial,<sup>74</sup> and he declared proudly that he grew up with parsimonious habits.<sup>75</sup> Cato felt free to give advice on where an olive-crushing mill and its accoutrements could be bought most cheaply, and at what price, but preserved decorum by conducting the disreputable business of lending money for naval ventures through freedmen agents.<sup>76</sup>

Cato's great-grandson followed his example: when the younger Cato was entrusted with the job of liquidating the estate of the dead king Ptolemy of Cyprus, he auctioned the goods himself to the highest bidder and returned the proceeds to the Roman treasury, thereby alienating friends who would otherwise have profited as intermediaries.<sup>77</sup> The frugality exemplified by the Catos had many roots, including the philosophical tradition of the Cynics, but was also a fundamentally Roman value,<sup>78</sup> as Cicero also recognizes in his *On Duties* when writing about great men who lived honorable lives of retirement:

74. In reference to the anecdote from *Off.* 2.89 cited above, Dyck 1996 ad loc. cites the elder Pliny, who sees Cato's thrift as the point: *summa omnium in hoc spectando fuit, ut fructus is maxime probaretur, qui quam minimo impendius constaturus esset.* HN 18.29–30.

75. *ego iam a principio in parsimonia atque in duritia atque industria omnem adulescentiam meam abstinui, agro colendo, saxis Sabinis, silicibus repastinandis atque conserendis.* *Orat. frag.* 128 Malcovati.

76. *Agr.* 22, *Plut. Cat. Mai.* 21.6–7. Gabba 1980, 93, sums up Cato's attitudes by citing a fragment of his speech *de sumptu suo* which describes how his villas lack even plaster on the walls, concluding that his practice was to put money only in those ventures which would return the greatest profit.

77. *Plut. Cat. Min.* 36.

78. Kloft 1970, 35–46, argues for *parsimonia* as the original Roman value, which *liberalitas* succeeded as a Greek import. Verboven 2002, 36 n. 4, disputes this analysis, but Kloft nevertheless demonstrates the deep roots of Roman frugality.

delectarentur re sua familiari, non eam quidem omni ratione exaggerantes neque excludentes ab eius usu suos potiusque et amicis imperitantes et rei publicae, si quando usus esset. quae primum bene parta sit nullo neque turpi quaestu neque odioso, deinde augeatur ratione, diligentia, parsimonia, tum quam plurimis, modo dignis, se utilem praebat nec libidini potius luxuriaeque quam liberalitati et beneficentiae pareat. haec praescripta seruantem licet magnifice, grauiter animoseque uiuere atque etiam simpliciter, fideliter, uere hominum amice. (*Off.* 1.92)

They were content with managing their own property—not increasing it by any and every means nor debarring their kindred from the enjoyment of it, but rather, if ever there were need, sharing it with their friends and with the state. Only let it, in the first place, be honestly acquired, by the use of no dishonest or fraudulent means; let it, in the second place, increase by wisdom, industry, and thrift; and, finally, let it be made available for the use of as many as possible (if only they are worthy) and be at the service of generosity and beneficence rather than of sensuality and excess. By observing these rules, one may live in magnificence, dignity, and independence, and yet in honor, truth and charity toward all.

Cicero advocates a dignified marriage of reciprocal giving along with industrious thrift (*diligentia, parsimonia*) as an ideal for one who does not take part in public affairs, and he echoes his exhortation to thrift later in the work.<sup>79</sup> As the examples from the lives of the two Catos demonstrate, the thrifty man takes a commodity view of his economic dealings. The desire to get the maximum value out of each object he uses or acquires necessarily results in his seeking to get the greatest profit from economic transactions rather than showing generosity to build longer-term relationships.<sup>80</sup> The younger Cato's behavior in selling off the Cyprian royal estate illustrates this directly: instead of benefiting his associates in the usual fashion by allowing them to profit from the sales, he seeks to maximize

79. 2.87: *res autem familiaris quaeri debet iis rebus, a quibus abest turpitudine, consequari autem diligentia et parsimonia, eisdem etiam rebus augeri.* Cf. Sall. *Cat.* 9–13, Livy *praef.* 11.

80. Habinek 1998, 47–49, shows how the elder Cato himself attempted to appropriate certain aspects of commodity language, such as the concept of *aestimatio*, as aristocratic. In this instance, Cato is responding to the traditionally negative associations of commodity exchange by transforming them into acceptable aristocratic values.

profit. That he does so for a virtuous cause, enriching the Roman treasury, rather than his own gain makes Cato's action one of thrift rather than mercantile greed.

We have thus far considered how Cicero implicitly defines four types of socioeconomic actors. Another distinction from *On Duties* will help distinguish them further. At the opening of the treatise, Cicero outlines four sources of virtue: the perception of truth, the conservation of society and maintenance of duties, greatness of mind, and finally the observance of order and the mean, all of which require moderation and temperance (*modestia et temperantia*, *Off.* 1.15). Cicero makes clear that this last quality amounts to control of the desires (*cauetque ne . . . in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinose aut faciat aut cogitet*, *Off.* 1.14).<sup>81</sup> The opposite of such control was *incontinentia*, or lack of self-control, a problem that in the Roman view underlies nearly all vices.<sup>82</sup> Two of Cicero's economic types act with *temperantia*, the other two with *incontinentia*, allowing us to arrange them, along with some characteristic terms, in the following scheme:

	<i>concordia</i>	<i>discordia</i>
	control	lack of control
	<i>temperantia/sophrosune</i>	<i>incontinentia/akrasia</i>
Reciprocal	generous	prodigal
	<i>liberalitas, gratia,</i> <i>beneuolentia, fides</i>	<i>prodigalitas</i>
Commodity	thrifty	mercenary
	<i>utilis, frugi bonae,</i> <i>parsimonia</i>	<i>uenalis, faenus,</i> <i>merces</i>

This value structure represents not only Cicero's thought, but also tensions found already in the elder Cato's day both between public generosity and private luxury and between thrift and mercantile activity.<sup>83</sup>

Among these four types, the merchant merits special attention as a paradoxical figure, because he acts with both *incontinentia* and *temperantia*. As Morley writes,

The passion for making money, apparently as an end in itself, was one of the main grounds for suspicion against merchants; such men had

81. Cicero elsewhere calls this quality "temperance opposed to the desires" (*temperantia libidinum inimica*, *Off.* 3.117). See further Dyck 1996, 97, ad 1.14.

82. Edwards 1993, 5.

83. Gabba 1980, 93.

no control over their appetites, they made profit from the needs of others, they threatened the social order and they could certainly never be trusted. . . . It was not their values, wealth or power, but the implications of their practices for the traditional values of the community and for the whole idea of "value," that aroused anxiety.<sup>84</sup>

The merchant suffers from *incontinentia*, but is also *astutus* and *uafer*, careful and calculating in his pursuits. This simultaneous incontinence and control make for an enigmatic and dangerous figure. Herman Melville presents a similar set of features in Claggart, a character in his novella *Billy Budd*:

though the man's even temper and discreet bearing would seem to intimate a mind peculiarly subject to the law of reason, not the less in his heart he would seem to riot in complete exemption from that law, having apparently little to do with reason further than to employ it as an ambidexter implement for effecting the irrational. That is to say: toward the accomplishment of an aim which in wantonness of malignity would seem to partake of the insane, he will direct a cool judgement sagacious and sound. These men are true madmen, and of the most dangerous sort, for their lunacy is not continuous but occasional, evoked by some special object; it is probably secretive, which is as much to say it is self-contained, so that when moreover, most active, it is to the average mind not distinguishable from sanity, and for the reason above suggested that whatever its aims may be—and the aim is never declared—the method and the outward proceeding are always perfectly rational. (*Billy Budd*, chap. 11)<sup>85</sup>

Like Melville, our poets find this seemingly paradoxical combination of traits compelling both as a source of tension in their epic narratives and as a reflection of their societies. For this reason, and because the epics center on social conflict, the figure of the merchant often looms larger than that of the other types.

The values that Cicero expresses largely persist into the early Empire,

84. Morley 2007, 84, 88.

85. Cf. La Rochefoucauld 1964, 11: "Les passions en engendrent souvent qui leur sont contraires: l'avarice produit quelquefois la prodigalité et la prodigalité l'avarice; on est souvent ferme par faiblesse, audacieux par timidité."

as attested by Lucan's uncle Seneca in his treatise *On Benefits*.<sup>86</sup> The mere fact that Seneca devotes seven books to socioeconomic behavior suggests its importance to him and his society.<sup>87</sup> Like Cicero, he considers reciprocity fundamental to social cohesion. He announces at the opening of the work that his task is "to discuss benefits and examine that thing which binds human society together most of all" (*de beneficiis dicendum est et ordinanda res, quae maxime humanam societatem alligat*, 1.4.2).<sup>88</sup> Seneca also recognizes the four types of socioeconomic actors found in Cicero's *On Duties*. He praises due liberality in *On Benefits* and, in his Letter 87 to Lucilius, condemns luxury and prodigality while presenting the elder Cato as a model of frugality. Seneca warns the readers of *On Benefits* not to regard gifts and favors as loans, lest they become like the *avarus exactor* ("greedy tax collector"),<sup>89</sup> one version of the merchant figure whom he portrays negatively throughout his philosophical and poetic works.<sup>90</sup>

The advent of the Principate does affect Seneca's treatment of socioeconomic matters to a certain extent: he naturally gives less consideration to large-scale public benefactions than does Cicero, because these were all but monopolized by the *princeps*.<sup>91</sup> Yet because the forms of the Republic were maintained, not only were the fundamental dynamics of economic behavior among the Roman aristocracy preserved, but the *princeps* himself continued to adhere to these norms, even if the scope of his economic

86. Griffin 2000b, 549: "Though Seneca seems more abstract, more universal and less specifically Roman than Cicero, because he frequently raises the level of his discourse to that of the Wise Man and is concerned to emphasize the importance of material repayment next to intention, *de Beneficiis* too is revealing about the social *mores* of the Roman elite. Indeed, when compared, the two works indicate that there was substantial continuity in this respect between the Republic and the Principate."

87. Inwood 1995, 241–44, observes that the length of Seneca's treatise may seem surprising only because we have lost several treatments by other philosophers of the same subject.

88. Griffin 2003a, 101: "Seneca . . . thinks that the exchange of benefits reinforces social cohesion. Though he believes that giving benefits and returning gratitude properly are intrinsically valuable as are all virtuous acts, this does not create a conflict with his socially instrumental view of morality. For what the arguments for intrinsic value are meant to rule out is the motivation and justification of acts of beneficence in terms of the narrow *self-interest* of the individual concerned, e.g. giving in the hope of return, or out of a desire for security (4.22.3), or, on the other hand, showing gratitude because of fear (4.18.4). The interests of the social system as a whole, or the public good as Seneca calls it (7.16.2), are different from the self-interest of individuals."

89. *Ben.* 1.2.2–3.

90. Williams 2003 ad *Breu.* 2.2 cites *Ep.* 90.24, *Med.* 318–28, *Phaed.* 530–31, to which we might add *Med.* 329–39, 361–63; *N.Q.* 5.18.4. For similar sentiments apart from the epic poets, Williams cites *Tib.* 1.3.37–40, 2.3.39, *Ov. Am.* 3.8.43–44, 49–50.

91. Griffin 2000b, 549.

activity was of a different order.<sup>92</sup> Seneca also approaches his topic from a less Roman and more global perspective than Cicero, as befits his greater commitment to a universal philosophy.<sup>93</sup>

But Seneca's most conspicuous difference from Cicero lies in a seeming paradox in his discussion. He insists, on the one hand, that one must not treat reciprocal exchanges like commodity exchanges (*demus beneficia, non feneremus*, *Ben.* 1.1.9), nor even use the language of the latter for the former, lest one fall into the habit of viewing gifts and favors as so many payments.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, Seneca consistently violates his own precept. When in the same letter he urges this view upon Lucilius, Seneca also tells him that it is an ungrateful person who returns a benefit "without interest" (*ingratus est qui beneficium reddit sine usura*, 81.18). Unlike Cicero, Seneca discusses in detail how one should handle a variety of situations of exchange, so it may be that his only vocabulary for analyzing reciprocal interactions so acutely is that of commodity transactions. Yet there is also a deeper and more personal reason for this contradiction. Seneca was himself a wealthy man actively involved in commerce: Dio writes that Seneca once forced a massive loan upon the Britons and then suddenly called it in, to their great loss.<sup>95</sup> Although he advocates traditional socioeconomic values consistent with those of Cicero, Seneca finds himself in a different position: precisely because he is more comfortable with the language and affairs of commerce, he must insist all the more strenuously on their conceptual separation from reciprocal relations.

Seneca's position is emblematic of a broader change taking place as part of the transition to Empire:

The Roman revolution of the 40s and 30s BC marks the transition from dominance by an aristocracy to dominance by an elite. During the last centuries of the republic, political power was reproduced largely, albeit not exclusively, by inheritance. A handful of families provide a vastly disproportionate number of high officials; consuls are usually the descendants of other consuls, and when they are not, they tend to

92. Griffin 2000b, 551: "Not only did the republican social patterns of upper-class life remain in place, but the etiquette of benefactions between members of that class was applied to relations between them and the Princeps, for, in theory, the Princeps was one among equals, and it was in the interests of all parties concerned that the theory be respected."

93. Griffin 2000b, 549.

94. *Ep.* 81. Griffin 2003a points out this paradox and gives further examples of Seneca's exhortation to separate reciprocal from commodity exchanges.

95. Dio. Cass. 62.2.

be at least the sons of other senators. During the principate, in contrast, elites are replicated. That is to say, the structure of domination by a small group of wealthy individuals and families over masses of slaves, freedmen, and poorer citizens persists from generation to generation, but the composition of the upper sector of society is fluid, with families falling into and out of power with ease. Indeed, one study concludes that seventy-five percent of senatorial families “disappeared” (i.e. vanished from senatorial ranks) from any given generation to the next during the principate. The instability of the elite goes hand in hand with persistent, albeit fraught loyalty to the emperor. It is the emperor, more than the collective traditions of a diminished aristocracy, who, when the system is running smoothly, guarantees the authorizing connection with the past requisite to rule over a traditional society and who mobilizes the ideological resources of the present, such as religion, education, art, display, and munificence.<sup>96</sup>

While the role of the emperor as *primus inter pares* ensures continuity with republican values, fluidity within the upper sector of society creates the need for ideological accommodations. Caesar and his heirs dilute inherited prestige by packing the Senate with new arrivals and elevating imperial freedmen, enfeebling the traditional aristocracy. Seneca lives in and responds to a world where earned wealth is becoming ever more a path toward, and marker of, elite status. This process goes so far that, in contrast to the chorus of moralists who inveigh against luxury in the republican period, Statius and Martial write poems demonstrating an “ideology [according to which] luxury not only finds full cultural legitimization, but also reveals its precious functionality as a political instrument: it proves to be an instrument, not of disintegration (which was the traditional accusation of the moralists) but rather of social cohesion.”<sup>97</sup> Seneca’s Stoic concern for all of humanity would not allow him to restrict his view to such elites and the cohesive pleasure of their shared luxury. He must insist that mutual benefits make society cohere, even as he participates in, and feels the threat from, a view of interactions as commodity exchange. In his changed times, this problem presses upon Seneca much more urgently than it did Cicero.

Seneca’s strenuous efforts to distinguish between economic behaviors point to the underlying subjectivity of such distinctions. Exchange gestures

96. Habinek 2000, 278.

97. Rosati 2006, 57, drawing especially on Newlands 2002.



become reciprocal or commodity only through the perceptions of the participants who assess value and intent. As Seneca emphasizes, heightened scrutiny or cynicism can turn any gift or favor into a payment, collapsing reciprocal into commodity exchange. At the same time, exchanges may originate from a mixture of motivations.<sup>98</sup> The subjectivity of exchange will be an important factor in my interpretation of the socioeconomic dimension of Latin epic. Certain actions will plainly fall into one category or another: Aeneas's gifts to Latinus in the *Aeneid*, for example, or Dido's purchase of African land. But most other exchange acts admit multiple interpretations. In the *Thebaid*, Amphiaraus's wife, Eriphyle, receives Harmonia's necklace as a gift, but Amphiaraus sees it as a bribe to ensure his participation in the war.<sup>99</sup> A further layer of subjectivity is added when characters or the narrator use economic language to describe an action that does not have an obvious economic dimension. Such is the case in the second passage cited at the opening of this introduction, where Juno casts the revenge she intends to take for the Trojan and Latin alliance as a "fee" (*mercede*) she will extract. In Roman society, "how one behaves in the act of exchange, whether of a gift or commodity, becomes the mark of one's quality as a citizen."<sup>100</sup> Roman audiences, attentive to distinctions in exchange behavior, would have interpreted poetic characters in such terms.

Roman audiences would also have been sensitive to a critical aspect of socioeconomic behavior neglected in the discussion so far: consumption. The typology given above focuses on how goods and favors are exchanged, but the question of how goods were used also loomed large in the Roman mind: wasteful self-indulgence, or *luxuria*, was a frequent target of criticism for the moralists.<sup>101</sup> *Luxuria* is another form of *incontinentia*, where one spends too much on oneself, and is thus related both to prodigality, where one may spend too much on others, and to mercantile behavior, where one withholds from others to spend on oneself. In his remarks on the life of retirement, Cicero illustrates how *luxuria* is the opposite of *beneficentia*, inasmuch as giving too much to oneself means not

98. Cicero emphasizes the need to take the proper perspective on an exchange: *benefici liberalesque sumus, non ut exigamus gratiam neque enim beneficium faeneramur sed natura propensi ad liberalitatem sumus; sic amicitiam non spe mercedis adducti sed quod omnis eius fructus in ipso amore inest, expetendam putamus. Amic. 31. Cf. Verboven 2002, 63, 66, on Roman perceptions of the thin line between generous and mercenary behavior.*

99. Amphiaraus protests to Pluto that he has been "sold out for evil gold" (*iniquo uenditus auro, Theb. 8.104*) by his wife.

100. Morley 2007, 87.

101. See the index of Edwards 1993 s.v. *luxury*, p. 227. For full consideration of Roman luxury in its private and public forms respectively, see Weeber 2003 and Weeber 2006.

giving enough to others. Cicero writes that a man can seek to increase his wealth from his estate honorably, provided that he uses his earnings for liberality and beneficence rather than for personal pleasure and luxury (*nec libidini potius luxuriaeque quam liberalitati et beneficentiae pareat*, *Off.* 1.92). I have noted how such luxury meets with greater approval by Statius's day, not least in his own collection of occasional poems, the *Siluae*. The following chapters will take account of each poet's treatment of consumption, but, as Statius's different position on luxury might suggest, consumption will merit special attention in the *Thebaid*.

Perhaps the most conspicuous ethical type subject to opprobrium for *incontinentia* was the tyrant. To the Romans, history had provided notable examples of ruthless despots, including Phalaris of Acragas, the sixth-century tyrant of Sicily notorious for his cruelty,<sup>102</sup> as well as the tyrants of Greek tragedy.<sup>103</sup> The negative example of such figures reinforced the traditional Roman aversion to kingship.<sup>104</sup> As with the prodigal and the merchant, the tyrant shows an *incontinentia* that tends toward self-indulgence,<sup>105</sup> and he shares with the merchant a malign cleverness, which allows him to retain his grip on power.

Unlike these other types, however, the tyrant is a political rather than an economic figure. His *incontinentia* results in a willingness and even desire to seriously harm others in order to gain, maintain, and exercise control over a community. Whereas the prodigal and the merchant create social dislocation and dissolve personal bonds, the tyrant disrupts social order more directly, using his dominance to compel, injure, and kill. His primary attributes are violence, cruelty, arrogance, and lust (*uis, crudelitas, superbia, libido*).<sup>106</sup> The more directly threatening behavior of the tyrant accounts for the greater cultural currency of this figure in the political life of Rome, particularly during the late Republic, when the memory of the bloody dictatorship of Sulla was still fresh.

Despite these differences, however, the underlying *incontinentia* of bad socioeconomic actors and tyrants allows the poets to portray their characters with complementary features of both types. Scholars have argued

102. Cic. *Verr.* 4.73.

103. Kurke 1999, 67, gives references to Greek sources on tyrants.

104. Rawson 1975, 152–56.

105. Leigh 1996.

106. McGuire 1997, 149. See further pp. 147–84. Cicero speaks of the tyrant's "bestial savagery and barbarism" (*feritas et immanitas beluae*, *Off.* 3.32). Leigh 1996 discusses Cicero's portrayal of Antony as a tyrant, as well as the literary revival of the tyrant figure during Augustus's reign in the *Thyestes* of Varius Rufus.

that several figures in our three epics act like tyrants: Mezentius in the *Aeneid*, Caesar in the *Civil War*, and Eteocles, Polynices, and Creon in the *Thebaid*.<sup>107</sup> In subsequent chapters, we will see that each of these characters also has features of the merchant or prodigal. Thus, for example, when the poet merges the features of the merchant with those of the tyrant, he not only compounds the impression of malign calculation, but also alters the dynamic of social status. The tyrant is ordinarily an aristocrat who betrays his class by seizing absolute power, but when he acts in a mercantile manner as well, he becomes in addition base, petty, and contemptible. The innate baseness of the tyrant so revealed disassociates him from the aristocracy, allowing its other members to reject him utterly and reassure themselves that their values would not lead to such behavior.

### Economic Morality in the Epic Tradition

Vergil, Lucan, and Statius construct the economic aspects of their epic worlds not solely upon the basis of contemporary values, but upon epic precedents as well: Vergil's complex blending of heroic and historical time is basic to his poetics.<sup>108</sup> In the case of economic matters, this blending was made easier by the fact that Roman norms roughly correspond to those of the Homeric world. Homeric heroes generally favor reciprocity through gift exchange and mutual hospitality, and likewise disdain commodity exchange, much as did the Roman aristocracy of Vergil's day.<sup>109</sup> When Vergil's Aeneas exchanges gifts with Dido and Latinus, he thus acts in a way that is honorable and proper both for a chieftain of the Homeric age and for an Augustan Roman.

Vergil does, however, make one significant deviation from his Homeric models. In the *Iliad* the Achaeans participate without dishonor in a certain amount of ordinary commodity exchange.<sup>110</sup> Vergil largely eliminates this

107. On the tyrannical aspects of Vergil's Mezentius, see Martin 1978; La Penna 1980, 10–11; and La Penna 1984, 513–14. On Lucan's Caesar, see Syndikus 1958, 94–98; Ahl 1976, 229–30; Leigh 1997, 288–306; and Sklenár 2003, 109. On Statius's Eteocles and Polynices, see Helzlsouer 1996, 180; on Creon, see Dominik 1994, 88–92.

108. For an overview and references see Horsfall 1999, 278–80.

109. Homer typically portrays commodity exchange in a negative light. The classic example is accusation of Euryalus against Odysseus at *Od.* 8. 161–64 that he is like a merchant or trader and so could not be noble enough to participate in the games of the Phaeacians. On this scene and Odysseus's connection to trade more generally, see von Reden 1995, 61–67, who also notes at p. 67 n. 41 the observation of Finley 1981, 235, that there are no sale transactions between two Greeks or two Trojans in Homeric epic. For overviews of Homeric economic ethics, see Seaford 1994, 1–29, and Brown 1998.

110. The Achaeans buy wine from Euenos, the son of Jason, with bronze, iron, skins, oxen,

possibility—Dido's purchase of African land is not only the sole commodity exchange in which a character of her status is involved, but also the only literal and explicit commodity transaction in the poem. Vergil thus all but universalizes an already dominant strain in the Homeric system of socioeconomic values. In doing so, he also refines ideals articulated more explicitly and less decorously by his Roman-epic predecessor Ennius. In his *Annales*, Ennius puts the following words in the mouth of Pyrrhus of Epirus, enemy of the Roman Republic in the third century BCE:

nec mi aurum posco nec mi pretium dederitis:  
 non cauponantes bellum sed belligerantes,  
 ferro, non auro, uitam cernamus utrique,  
 uosne uelit an me regnare era quidue ferat Fors  
 uirtute experiamur. et hoc simul accipe dictum:  
 quorum uirtuti belli fortuna pepercit,  
 corundem libertati me parcere certum est.  
 dono, ducite, doque uolentibus cum magnis dis.<sup>111</sup>

I do not seek gold, nor will you give me any payment. Let us decide whether either side lives or dies not as tradesmen in war but warriors, with iron, not gold. Let us test by our courage whether mistress Fortune wishes you or me to rule, and what she shall bring. Whomever the chance of war spares, I shall spare too. Take your prisoners; I grant them to you as a gift, and give them with the blessings of the great gods.

Pyrrhus refuses to accept payment from the Roman general Fabricius in return for the Roman prisoners he holds. Instead, Pyrrhus offers the prisoners to Fabricius as a gift sanctioned by the gods. Because we have only fragments of the *Annales*, we cannot know how Pyrrhus's behavior compares to that of other figures, or why Ennius chooses a Greek rather than a Roman to make this declaration of Roman economic values.<sup>112</sup> But his Pyrrhus, who claimed descent from Achilles, does represent a translation of Homeric economic values into Roman culture. Vergil may thus be re-

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and slaves (7.467–75; see Seaford 1994, chap. 1, on this and other examples). See Brown 1998, 165 n. 3, for further references to the marginalization of trade in Homer.

111. Skutsch 1985, 87, lines 183–90.

112. Livy's Camillus says in a similar vein that Romans should not be content to buy their freedom from the Gauls with gold, but should win it by the sword (*suos in aceruum conicere sarcinas et arma aptare ferroque non auro recipere patriam iubet*, 5.49).

sponding to Ennius much as he does to Homer, by preserving the underlying socioeconomic principle while purifying and elevating it. We do not find a word as common as *cauponor* in the *Aeneid*, nor such a bald statement of economic values.

Vergil not only eschews explicit commodity exchanges, but even suppresses the commodity dimension of the Homeric honor economy. In the *Iliad*, the heroic quest for spoils has features of both commodity and reciprocal exchange: heroes show a clear desire for immediate gain but also give spoils as gifts.<sup>113</sup> The two-sided nature of this heroic behavior is encapsulated in the well-known exchange of armor between Glaucus and Diomedes. The heroes treat this as a reciprocal exchange without a close accounting of the value of the arms, but the narrator immediately evaluates the trade as a poor bargain for Glaucus (*Il.* 6.234–36). The narrator's frank estimation of reciprocal-exchange goods in commodity terms would be unusual for a Homeric warrior, but is nevertheless consistent with a warrior's sensitivity to the value that goods contribute to his honor, or *timē*.<sup>114</sup> Thus the Homeric world seems to admit a positive, controlled form of commodity exchange among its aristocrats. By contrast, we do not see Vergil's Aeneas taking spoils, and the poet alludes only occasionally to the use of spoils as gifts.<sup>115</sup> This choice forces the traditional heroic economy—where spoils become gifts given to secure alliances that in turn enable the procurement of more spoils—into the dim background.

We could attribute Vergil's suppression of the commodity features of the Homeric economy, as well as other commodity transactions, simply to the impulse toward elevated decorum evident throughout the *Aeneid*.<sup>116</sup> Yet Vergil does employ commodity language as part of a rich system of socioeconomic discourse in the *Aeneid*. The generally negative associations of such language suggest that the exclusion of commodity transactions is itself an expression of the poem's socioeconomic ideology. Much as the Roman aspirations depicted on the shield of Aeneas contrast with the universal vision of humanity on the shield of Homer's Achilles, the exclusion of commodity exchange makes the *Aeneid* a projection of Roman

113. Ready 2007 explores this opposition in terms of the short- and long-term transactional orders of Parry and Bloch 1989.

114. On the reciprocal and commodity features of *timē*, see Cartledge 1998, 29. On the Homeric economy generally, see Morris 1986 and Donlan 1997. Further discussion and bibliography of the Glaucus-Diomedes exchange at von Reden 1995, 26, with Fineberg 1999.

115. Discussed further in chapter 1.

116. On Vergilian epic decorum see Heinze 1993, 381, with the qualifications of Feeney 1991, 182–83, and Clausen 2002, 1–25.

aristocratic economic ethics rather than any attempt to embrace universal economic realities.<sup>117</sup> Vergil's departure from Homer on socioeconomic matters would have helped reinforce the expectation among his readers, founded in the long association between aristocracy and epic,<sup>118</sup> that in this epic environment more stringent Roman aristocratic mores were the norm. His audience would naturally engage the sort of sensitivities to economic morality that Cicero displays in *On Duties* as they perceived events and characters. In particular, the general absence of commodity transactions in the poem would make the language of commodity exchange that Vergil does use all the more salient.

Although Lucan follows Vergil in abandoning the Homeric heroic economy, in other respects his treatment of socioeconomic matters is consistent with his overall antithetical stance toward Vergilian precedent. As part of this posture, Lucan reverts to an earlier Roman tradition of historical epic. He includes in his narrative relatively prosaic details of war and politics, leading ancient critics to condemn his epic as insufficiently grand and poetic.<sup>119</sup> Plentiful references to commodity transactions contribute to the historical tone of the *Civil War*, but these transactions also play a prominent role in the corruption and destruction of the Republic that the poem documents. Lucan thus exposes the economic realities that Vergil suppresses, but he appears to see no greater virtue in commodity exchange than his predecessor did. Dysfunctional reciprocity and corrupting commodity exchange leave the economic system of the *Civil War* as aporetic as the political one.

By returning to heroic epic in the *Thebaid*, Statius necessarily follows Vergilian precedent in the use of economic concepts and language. Yet he too departs from this legacy, if not as radically as Lucan, by suppressing commodity exchange to an even greater extent than did Vergil—there are no literal commodity exchanges in the *Thebaid*. Furthermore, the system

117. Von Reden 1995, 15, writes that "it is . . . agreed that heroic poetry in general is a genre in which a particular self-conscious and self-aggrandising class depicts its own ideals; its content is a social elite's normative and ideological story of its own past, and thus of itself," giving further references to Homeric epic. Vergil's thorough divorce of reciprocity from its necessary commodity counterpart contributes to the feeling of suspended unreality that pervades the poem, described by Johnson 1976.

118. "Homer was an important element of elite Roman ideology. His texts defined a world of aristocratic epistemology and stood as the paradigm against which to measure one's experience." Farrell 2004, 263.

119. Implicit in Petronius's counterexample of epic narrative on the same subject (119–24), though we cannot be sure that Petronius saw all of Lucan's poem, and explicit in the comment of Servius ad *Aen.* 1.382: *Lucanus namque ideo in numero poetarum esse non meruit, quid uidetur historiam composuisse, non poema.* Cf. Martial 14.194.

of reciprocal exchange, which still had some vibrancy in the *Aeneid*, all but vanishes. In its place is consumption, in its various forms. Each of our epic poets is concerned with waste and loss, but Statius alone makes wasteful expenditure of blood and lives his central theme by relegating other forms of economic behavior to the background and strongly thematizing consumption.

### Method and Types of Evidence

Our poets represent the economic types and concepts outlined above in two ways. They describe literal exchanges, such as Dido's land purchase, considered at the beginning of this introduction. These are largely reciprocal in the *Aeneid*, of both reciprocal and commodity forms in the *Civil War*, and exceedingly scarce in the *Thebaid*. The poets also describe metaphorical exchanges, by which I mean instances when characters or the narrator apply economic vocabulary to situations that are not literally economic. Juno's use of the word *mercede*, examined above, is one example: she speaks of the revenge she will take for being forced to accept the union of Trojan and Latin but puts this revenge in commodity-exchange terms that are not literally accurate. Clearly, distinguishing metaphorical from literal uses is often as difficult as determining whether an exchange is of a reciprocal or a commodity type. I understand metaphorical expressions of economic behavior to be those in which we perceive an agent, be it narrator or character, using economic language to add a level of interpretation. The description of Dido's land purchase has no salient subjective filter and so appears as a literal economic act. Juno's word *mercede*, on the other hand, does raise the question of the extent to which it reflects her disposition.

I describe as "socioeconomic" or, more briefly, "economic" words or phrases that denote actions or dispositions of or related to reciprocal exchange, commodity exchange, personal consumption, or closely related behaviors. The following is a list of some key economic terms. I have examined each instance of these words but do not limit myself to them.

Reciprocal exchange: *don-*, *dotal-*, *grati-*, *hono-*, *hosp-*, *larg-*, *-mun-*, *prodig-*

Commodity exchange: *car-*, *commerc-*, *deb-*, *em-*, *iact-*, *faen-*, *lucr-*, *merc-* (*merx* does not occur), *mutu-*, *pacisc-*, *pact-*, *pecuni-*, *-pend-*, *preti-*, *pro*, *solu-*, *uen-* (including *uenal-*, *uend-*), *uil-*, *usur-*

Personal consumption: *auar-*, *consum-*, *lux-*, *utor*, *usus*

(Roots not included in the table because they do not occur in the epics include *benef-*, *liberal-*, *negoti-*, *nundin-*, *parsimoni-*, and *salari-*).<sup>120</sup> Some of these words have senses in common usage that are not primarily economic. The word *commercium*, for example, can signify commodity exchange or, by metaphorical extension, other kinds of human interaction. Yet even when these extended uses become dead metaphors, poets will still exploit the underlying literal commodity meaning. Striking usages such as Juno's *mercede* would have encouraged the audience to pay close attention to such vocabulary.

Economic signifiers and referents do not always align closely, of course. Economic transactions need not be described in specialized vocabulary, and nearly any interaction, economic or not, can be described as exchange. Furthermore, Roman elites deliberately misapplied socioeconomic language by representing their commodity transactions as reciprocity: business associates were simply called "friends" (*amici*).<sup>121</sup> Personal consumption could be framed as legitimate use or as waste, or could be concealed. Amid such ambiguity, I will base my inquiry on the vocabulary above as the only elements that clearly activate a network of socioeconomic relations.<sup>122</sup> In the end, such interpretation of diction is a matter of judgment, and I hope to persuade the reader of mine.

120. For more on the meaning of many of these terms, see the index of Verboven 2002.

121. Verboven 2002, 41–44, 340.

122. I generally pass over words that encompass modes of economic activity but carry no specific economic connotation. So, for example, I include the word *donum*, "gift," in the table, but not the verb *do*, "I give," because it lacks a strong specific economic connotation: we give gifts, but also tools or books for use rather than possession. Perhaps the most significant exclusion of this sort is the word *mereo*, "to earn or deserve," which I generally leave out of consideration because it is usually impossible to isolate an economic sense of the word apart from its dominant, more purely ethical sense. Similarly, the word *praemium* is used of a "reward," but it belongs notionally to a sphere of competitive activity marked off from the social economy. See *TLL* s.v. *munus*, init., which quotes Donatus on Ter. *Eun.* 1057, and from Beck's collection *De differentiarum scriptoribus latinis* the following: *dona omnibus dantur, praemia uictori tribuuntur, munera deo offeruntur*. The *praemia palmae* of *Aen.* 5.70 show this word in its native frame of reference, competitive games. Such prizes are distinctly marked off from other uses of economic resources in society. When Aeneas, like Achilles before him, presents prizes for the games, he places them in view of all and apart from himself (*Il.* 23.256–61; *Aen.* 5.109–12) in order to demonstrate that he as prize giver no longer has any connection to them. The prize giver neither uses them up, nor expects any profit from them, nor expects to form any relationship based upon the giving of a prize. The prizes in effect become free resources that anyone can claim, provided he outdoes the others, much like unclaimed natural resources such as fish in the sea. I will take account of the *praemium* lexeme, however, in the exceptional cases where it is itself used metaphorically in a situation already figured by other indicators as economic.



In the first chapters of the following three sections, I survey the socioeconomic landscape of each poem. In the second chapters, I examine how the poets use economic language metaphorically to give insights into the thoughts and dispositions of their central characters. I argue, for example, that with this technique Vergil aligns the character of Aeneas with Turnus; Lucan places Cato in a tradition of individual socioeconomic independence epitomized by his great-grandfather; and Statius distinguishes the brothers Eteocles and Polynices from one another.

The close of each section brings the two chapters together in a judgment of the poet's overall use of economic concepts. I will argue that the *Aeneid* shows Vergil longing for the late republican economic system, dominated by aristocratic values, but doubting that it can be restored; that Lucan voices skepticism of republican socioeconomic values and tentatively advocates the return to an earlier Roman order; and that Statius turns away from reflection upon a sociopolitical system to express concern for the perils of excessive individual desires. In my conclusions, I briefly summarize these results with reference to contemporary work on exchange and human evolution.



PART I

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Reciprocity in Crisis:  
*Vergil's Aeneid*





## CHAPTER ONE

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### Roman Heroic Reciprocity

As Aeneas and the Trojan exiles first catch sight of their promised Italian homeland, they see four white horses grazing on the plain. Aeneas's father, Anchises, interprets this scene as an omen, and the Trojans pray for divine favor:

et pater Anchises "bellum, o terra hospita, portas:  
bello armantur equi, bellum haec armenta minantur.  
sed tamen idem olim curru succedere sueti  
quadripedes et frena iugo concordia ferre:  
spes et pacis" ait. tum numina sancta precamur  
Palladis armisonae, quae prima accepit ouantis,  
et capita ante aras Phrygio uelamur amictu,  
praeceptisque Heleni, dederat quae maxima, rite  
Iunoni Argivae iussos adolemus honores.  
—(3.539–47)

Then father Anchises: "'Tis war you bring, welcoming land; for war are horses armed, war these steeds portend. But yet," he cries, "those same steeds at times are wont to come under the chariot and beneath the yoke to bear the bit in concord; there is also hope of peace!" Then we pray to the holy power of Pallas, queen of clashing arms, who first welcomed our cheers, before the altar veil our heads in Phrygian robe, and, following the urgent charge which Helenus had given, duly offer to Argive Juno the prescribed sacrifice.

Anchises' prophecy anticipates the potential for both war and peace in Italy, which he seems to predict in that order: first the battles of Aeneas and

his descendants, then Rome's ultimately tranquil dominion, just as foretold by Jupiter (1.254–96). Yet when the Trojans reach Italy, events occur in the opposite order: they enjoy a brief moment of concord with the Latins before plunging into war. Even during the war there are moments of calm, including the idyll of Aeneas's friendship with Evander in Book 8 and the truce in Book 11 between Trojans and Latins for the burial of bodies. In hindsight, we see that Anchises' prediction offers less a sequential view of future events than a synchronic overview of the alternating periods of war and peace to come.

A second tension in the prophecy looks forward to the mixed success that Aeneas will have in creating reciprocal bonds to secure peace. Anchises refers to a "welcoming" (*hospita*) land of Italy that will nevertheless try to repel the Trojans. The word *hospita* is properly the female equivalent of *hospes*, and as such refers to a female "host" or "guest," often one with whom one has ties of guest-friendship. Yet, as Anchises' prophecy anticipates, this new land will be quite inhospitable to the Trojans, although Aeneas does form ties of *hospitium* with Latinus and Evander. As long as such ties hold, the Trojans can maintain these peaceful relations: thus from their initial meeting with Latinus the Trojans are said to "carry back peace" (*pacem reportant*) in the form of gifts:

talibus Aeneadae donis dictisque Latini  
sublimes in equis redeunt pacemque reportant.  
—(7.284–85)

With such words and gifts from Latinus, the sons of Aeneas, mounted on their horses, return carrying back peace.

Conversely, war results from the violation of reciprocal ties. Thus Aeneas accuses Latinus of breaking their ties of *hospitium* and turning to war:

rex nostra reliquit  
hospitia et Turni potius se credidit armis.  
—(11.113–14)

It is your king who forsook our guest-friend allegiance and preferred to trust himself to Turnus' sword.

Taken as a whole, then, the competing suggestions of reciprocal ties (*terra hospita*) and warfare in Anchises' prophecy suggest that Aeneas's

success will depend upon his ability to create and maintain reciprocal relations.<sup>1</sup>

As the prophecy suggests, socioeconomic relations in the *Aeneid* present a mixed picture, which I survey globally in this chapter. I will argue that Vergil represents reciprocal practices as choiceworthy and, at times, effective in bringing social solidarity. Yet he also allows that reciprocal mechanisms are easily disrupted and can be exploited for divisive or self-interested ends. With few exceptions, Vergil reserves commodity language for the actors who participate in this sort of undermining of reciprocal relations. In sum, Vergil provides his epic world with a socioeconomic dimension that is aligned with the dominant aristocratic view offered by Cicero. The hope for social solidarity lies in fostering strong reciprocal ties, even if these ties are subject to failure and manipulation.

### Successful Reciprocity

Unlike Lucan and Statius, Vergil presents a wide range of reciprocal behavior that is both admirable and successful. In the end, gestures such as the gift exchange between Aeneas and Latinus come to naught when overtaken by a metastasizing drive for war. But such efforts nevertheless illuminate the character of Aeneas, Evander, and others. They also establish a standard against which we measure the descent into conflict and the culpability of those who disrupt reciprocal bonds. In the following two sections I consider the range of successful reciprocity that defines this standard, first among mortals and then between mortals and divinities.

#### *Reciprocity among Mortals*

As we might expect given Homeric and Roman norms, of the four types of economic actors discussed in the introduction, the model of the generous man predominates in the *Aeneid*. Gifts are exchanged to initiate or strengthen relationships between Aeneas and Dido, Helenus, Andromache, Latinus (through Ilioneus), and Evander.<sup>2</sup> Evander shows that services can be offered as a gift when he goes to rouse Aeneas “mindful of his promised

1. Anchises can, of course, also be wrong in his predictions, as when he initially sends the Trojans to Crete rather than further westward in search of their homeland.

2. E.g., Aeneas with Dido: 1.647, 652; with Helenus and Andromache: 3.464, 469, 485; and with Latinus: 7.244, 259, 274–75.

service (*muneris*)" (8.464). Attempts to give gifts may be abortive, as when Latinus proposes an offer of gifts to Aeneas that is then made impossible by a new eruption of fighting (11.755). Such offers can also fail or need to be redirected, as when Diomedes refuses the gifts offered him by the Latins in exchange for his allegiance in their war against the Trojans, telling them to give the gifts to Aeneas instead (11.281–82).<sup>3</sup>

Gift giving is often part of *hospitium*, a reciprocal exchange of hospitality that creates a social bond between host and guest. Aeneas makes or refreshes numerous ties of *hospitium* throughout his journey—with King Anios on Delos (3.83), with Acestes on Sicily (5.63, 5.630), with Latinus (7.202, 7.264, 11.165), and with Evander (8.123, 188, 364, 532, 11.165).<sup>4</sup> Evander lives up to his name ("Good Man") in economic terms as in other respects, not only through his cultivation of ties of *hospitium* with Hercules and Aeneas, but also through his endorsement of modest living (8.364–65). As the founder of a city at the future site of Rome, Evander is in a sense the first Roman, so it is fitting that he practices and encourages frugality, a virtue associated with Rome's earliest generations. Evander engages virtuously in reciprocal and moderate commodity behaviors so long as he stays in his proto-Roman idyll, but, as we will see in the next chapter, his bond with Aeneas will force him to change. Apart from gifts and *hospitium*, the characters of the *Aeneid* do also exchange honor, despite the attenuation of the Homeric honor economy. Aeneas promises to give Dido honor in his future travels (1.609); Venus asks Jupiter why he is not giving *honor* to her and Aeneas (1.253); and the narrator promises Aeneas's nurse, Caieta, the continued honor of an Italian shore named after her (7.3).

The concept of *gratia*, which combines notions of gratitude and repayment, was fundamental to Roman reciprocity.<sup>5</sup> We find few explicit mentions of it in the poem,<sup>6</sup> but *gratia* underpins Vergil's most explicit and sweeping vision of social harmony. In his prophecy of a peaceful Roman society in Book 1, Jupiter mentions that Fides, Vesta, Romulus (as Quirinus), and Remus will establish laws (*iura*, 1.293) that will restrain Furor (1.292–96). These laws originate in part from a general trust represented by

3. As explained in the introduction, I will leave out of consideration "gifts" given as rewards in games, which are of course copious in Book 5.

4. Aeneas in fact inherits a bond of *hospitium* with Evander from Anchises (8.160–71) and is also related to him through their common descent from Atlas (8.134–42). See Renger 1985, 75–77.

5. Moussy 1966, 476; Wistrand 1979, 11.

6. Ilioneus uses the word in this sense when he asks Latinus's permission to settle in his land (7.232). I discuss Dido's use of the word (4.539) in the following chapter.

Fides, as well as family ties represented by both Vesta and the reconciled Romulus and Remus. Thus relationships of trust (*fides*) both within and outside the family obviate discord. *Fides* "manifested itself . . . in the scrupulous upholding of obligations derived from *gratia*":<sup>7</sup>

*Gratia* and *fides* were inextricably linked. A favour or gift was never supposed to be reciprocated immediately because this would extinguish the reciprocity "debt" that bound the *amici* together. Therefore, *gratia* implied a time lag, but even when a return gift had been made gratefulness was not supposed to end. Thus ideally *gratia* was a durable disposition that required mutual trust and feelings of solidarity—in other words *fides*. On the one hand, *fides* could be regarded as the trust put by one partner in another's *benignitas* and *gratia*. On the other hand, *fides* implied solidarity and had to be shown by *officia* that would inevitably generate *gratia*. Thus gratification was both the cause and effect of *fides*.<sup>8</sup>

Through their own actions and support of the law, *fides* and *gratia* serve to check destructive Furor. Jupiter's vision makes explicit the need for reciprocity to establish social harmony that we find implicit in the other successful reciprocal gestures among mortals.

### *Divine-Mortal Reciprocity*

Jupiter and other divinities do not just comment on exchange relations with mortals, of course, but also participate in them.<sup>9</sup> Mortals engage most fully in these relationships by performing sacrifices, often described as "gifts" or "honors,"<sup>10</sup> and offering vows in return for help with unseen

7. Verboven 2002, 40.

8. Verboven 2002, 40–41.

9. Intermediate between mortal-mortal and mortal-divine exchanges, we might say, are the relations between mortals and the dead. Aeneas gives copious gifts to placate and honor the dead throughout the poem, as do others. E.g., Aeneas and his companions: 5.54–58, 5.94, 5.101–2, 6.225, 11.26, 11.195; Andromache: 3.301–2. The Trojan Boroe laments that she cannot give gifts to the dead Anchises: 5.652; Aeneas sees comrades in the underworld who did not receive their burial offerings: 6.333.

10. Examples of Aeneas sacrificing or promising to sacrifice: 3.19–21, 3.84, 3.172, 3.178, 3.547 (to Pallas and Juno), 5.762, 8.76. Other characters: Dido: 1.632, 1.736; Anchises: 3.118, 3.264; Iarbas: 4.207, 217; priestess of Latinus: 7.85; Evander 8.102, 268; Latin women: 11.477; Latin mariners to Faunus: 12.768–69. Instructions of Helenus to Aeneas: 3.406, 437–39.



forces. The gods may reject these relationships by ignoring mortal overtures or participate by responding with favor.<sup>11</sup> Gods also give gifts to mortals, but these are usually expressions of the god's basic function, as when Apollo grants the healing arts to Iapyx.<sup>12</sup>

Interactions with the divine are typically put into a commodity form, the so-called *do ut des* contract,<sup>13</sup> which lacks the stigma of commodity exchange between mortals. Thus in the *Aeneid*, when Iarbas calls upon Jupiter to disrupt the relationship of Aeneas and Dido, he invokes his past sacrifices:<sup>14</sup>

et nunc ille Paris cum semiuiro comitatu,  
Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem  
subnexus, raptō potitur: nos munera templis  
quippe tuis ferimus famamque fouemus inanem.  
—(4.215–18)

And now that Paris with his eunuch train, his chin and perfumed locks  
bound with a Lydian turban, grasps the spoil; while we bring offerings  
to your temples, yours forsooth, and cherish an idle story.

Turnus, in the middle of his final duel with Aeneas, similarly prays to Faunus and the Earth to hold fast Aeneas's spear in return for his past offerings:

11. Apollo dismisses half of the prayer of Arruns, 11.794–95. Venus calls on divine favor toward mortals in appealing to Jupiter to help Aeneas: *hic pietatis honos!*, 1.253. Juno does likewise on behalf of Turnus: 10.618–20.

12. 12.393. Other examples are 1.636 (herd animals as gifts of Bacchus), 2.268 (sleep as a gift of the gods), and 8.181 (bread as the gifts of Ceres). An exception is Venus's grant of arms to Aeneas (8.608–9), but this is as much a gift from mother to son as from divinity to mortal. We see more direct aid at 8.657, where the Gauls are protected by the gift of a dark night, but this is more of a periphrasis, since no god is named as a giver.

13. Beard, North et al. 1998, 34, observe that mortal exchanges with Roman divinities were not contractual in the sense that they bound the gods to act and were often framed as voluntary demonstrations of generosity on both sides. They nevertheless note the standard legalistic phrasing in mortal-divine interactions, redolent of a commercial contract. In Plato's *Euthyphro* 14c, Socrates distinguishes between sacrifice, which involved giving gifts to the gods, and prayer, which involved asking something from them. He asks Euthyphro if he agrees that the alternation of these two forms of interaction means that piety is a sort of "trade" (*ἐμπορικὴ*) between gods and mortals. Euthyphro responds that Socrates might call it that if he wants to. Socrates represents these complex interactions with the gods as pure commodity transactions in order to discomfit Euthyphro with the suggestion that his piety amounts to no more than participation in a business transaction.

14. There is a double causation here: Jupiter grants Iarbas's request not only out of respect for past offerings, but also in order to advance his plans for Aeneas and the Trojans.

"Faune, precor, miserere" inquit "tuque optima ferrum  
Terra tene, colui uestros si semper honores,  
quos contra Aeneadae bello fecere profanos."  
—(12.777–79)

"Faunus, have pity, I pray, and you, most gracious Earth, hold fast the steel, if ever I have honoured your rites, which the sons of Aeneas, to the contrary, have defiled by war."

In both of these cases, the mortal character implicitly calls upon the gods to make some return for past services.

This demand for a return implies a contractual, commodity relationship that is inconsistent with the ideology of reciprocity among mortals but fully compatible with divine-mortal interactions. Contracts were used at all levels of Roman society in transactions where reliance on trust alone was deemed insufficient,<sup>15</sup> and the well-known fickleness of the gods called for similarly explicit terms of agreement. The gods of the *Aeneid* duly respect this sort of prayer: both Iarbas and Turnus obtain their requests. Although each calls for a return on their past offices, neither makes this link explicitly: Iarbas relates his past sacrifices and current request paratactically, while Turnus puts the prayer in its usual conditional (if I have ever helped you, help me) rather than causal form (because I have helped you, help me). Characters who make vows in the *Aeneid* articulate their requests similarly.<sup>16</sup> Requests to divinities thus succeed when their underlying commodity form is accompanied, though not obscured, by reciprocal gestures.

Like voluntary exchange between mortals and divinities, the divine visitation of justice also has underlying similarities with commodity transactions. Various forms of the common Roman expression for "paying a penalty" appear in the *Aeneid*, such as Neptune's promise to the winds that they will "pay him later for their misdeeds with a harsher penalty" (*post mihi non simili poena commissa luetis*, 1. 136).<sup>17</sup> Written testi-

15. Johnston 2003, 111, remarks on the general tendency in Roman business affairs to prefer formal contracts over those based on good faith.

16. E.g., Turnus makes many vows to the gods in response to Iris's encouragement of him to fight (9.22–24); Pallas prays to the Tiber for help in a spear throw, promising spoils (10.420–23); Evander makes vows to gods, which they do not fulfill (11.158); Metabus, father of Camilla, vows his daughter to Diana in return for allowing her to fly safely on his spear over a river (11.557–60). Other prayers that do not create an explicit obligation for the petitioner are at 2.689–91, 5.235–38, 10.251–55, 10.875–76, 11.785–93, and 12.188.

17. Other examples are at: 6.20, 6.739–40, 7.595, 10.669, 11.258.

mony to the concept of justice as payment begins with the scene of blood-price assessment on the shield of Achilles, where punishments appear in commodity-exchange terms of objects forfeited equivalent to the offense.<sup>18</sup> The precision of monetary calculation makes payment a useful metaphor even for non-monetary punishments, so that one can “pay” for an offense in other ways, as Laocoön is said to do with his life (*scelus expendisse merentem* / *Laocoonta ferunt*, 2.229–30). In Vergil’s day, such phrases are so common as to carry a very weak commodity connotation and so do not figure largely into the socioeconomic dynamics of the *Aeneid*.

Vergil can, however, bring the dormant commodity sense of the language for punishment alive. Priam asks the gods to “repay” (*persoluant*) Pyrrhus for killing his son in front of him:

“at tibi pro scelere,” exclamat, “pro talibus ausis  
di, si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curet,  
persoluant grates dignas et praemia reddant  
debita, qui nati coram me cernere letum  
fecisti et patrios foedasti funere uultus.”  
—(2.535–39)

“For your crime, for deeds so heinous,” he cries, “if in heaven there is any righteousness to mark such sins, may the gods pay you fitting thanks and render you due rewards, who has made me look on my own son’s murder, and defiled with death a father’s face!”

Priam employs several commodity terms in wishing punishment upon Pyrrhus—not only *persoluant*, but also *debita*, *reddant*, and the word *pro*, used twice to express evenly measured exchange. Such language is not just a feature of Priam’s speech, but is used in association with divine punishment throughout the poem.<sup>19</sup> Here, however, Vergil quickens the otherwise dormant commodity sense of Priam’s words by grouping several together and contrasting them with terms that refer to reciprocal exchange.

18. The killer promises to “pay” (*ἀποδοῦναι*, *Il.* 18.499) a full monetary penalty that his adversary refuses.

19. Many of these potential exchanges take the form of *quid pro quo*. Celaeno asks the Trojans if they would wage war on her sisters in return for the cattle that they themselves have slaughtered (3.245–49), Neptune predicts the death of one for many (5.814), Arruns is described as “owed” to the fates for his prospective killing of Camilla (11.759), and Juturna asks whether the misery of eternal life without her brother is the reward for her lost virginity (12.878).

Priam invokes the concept of *pietas*, with its inherent notion of reciprocal obligation,<sup>20</sup> in his request that the gods punish Pyrrhus for his crime, asking them to “pay” (*persoluant*) Pyrrhus with “thanks” (*grates*). Priam uses this last word ironically, for he is demanding that the gods punish Pyrrhus, not reward him. But this irony also conveys Priam’s judgment that Pyrrhus has failed to act in the proper reciprocal fashion appropriate even in the conduct of war. Priam reproaches Pyrrhus with the example of his father, Achilles, who outdid Pyrrhus by observing the reciprocal bonds of suppliant to supplicated (*iura fidemque / supplicis erubuit*, 2.541–42). Priam’s language thus suggests that because Pyrrhus lives by self-interested commodity principles rather than reciprocal norms, the gods should treat him with commodity forms of punishment. In this way, Vergil makes double use of the commodity language of punishment, which applies not only in its ordinary neutral fashion to relations with the gods,<sup>21</sup> but also, with its moral connotations, to the condemnation of Pyrrhus.

In this discussion of how the exchange acts of the gods take reciprocal and commodity forms, I have focused on the social roles and evident intentions of the participants. Others have offered readings of the *Aeneid*, based upon the theories of René Girard, that posit underlying universal social mechanisms as determinative for divine-mortal exchange. Girard argues that in every society violence arises from the natural tendency of individuals to emulate one another in striving for the same goals. Violence then spreads and intensifies until it escalates into what Girard calls a “sacrificial crisis,” when a victim chosen to represent the community is sacrificed. In the sacrificial process, the victim comes to be identified with the outside world, and in this way the community’s desire for violence is dissipated by being directed outward.<sup>22</sup>

Bandera interprets the *Aeneid* in light of this model, arguing that Vergil represents the foundation of Rome as possible only through a human sacrifice following a crisis of violence.<sup>23</sup> In his view, the contagious nature of the poem’s violence and the similarity between aggressors such

20. Traina 1984a, 93, gives reciprocity as one of the four qualities that define *pietas*, along with a sense of obligation, emotional movement, and applicability to gods or mortals. Further references on the concept of *pietas* can be found at Ahl 1976, 275 n. 52.

21. Priam does not put his prayer in commodity terms, but instead casts the underlying *quid pro quo* (“I have honored you, so you should punish Pyrrhus”) as a more general call to the gods to act upon their customary *pietas*. He reserves commodity language for the crimes of Pyrrhus and the divine punishment Pyrrhus deserves.

22. Girard 1977.

23. Bandera 1994.

as Aeneas and Turnus (e.g., 12.500–504) are equivalent to the generalized and indiscriminate escalation of violence that precedes Girard's sacrificial crisis.<sup>24</sup> Neptune expresses the fundamental principle of the sacrificial act when he anticipates the loss of Palinurus with the words *unum pro multis dabitur caput* (5.815). The life of Palinurus, as well as those of Creusa, Orontes, and Misenus, is figuratively sacrificed for the sake of the establishment of the greater community that will benefit the rest, and these "accidental deaths . . . have anticipated and prefigured the final (the original) death of the founding victim."<sup>25</sup> They lead up to Aeneas's killing of Turnus, through which Aeneas becomes "the sacrificer, the priest, who strikes the sacred blow that will kill the victim, who will become the cornerstone for the foundation of the city."<sup>26</sup>

Despite these points of contact, however, the narrative of the *Aeneid* fundamentally defies Girard's template.<sup>27</sup> An essential point in Girard's model is that the sacrifice of the original victim brings an abatement of violence, and indeed hostilities will cease after the death of Turnus, even if Jupiter tells Venus that after Aeneas's death, Ascanius will establish Alba Longa *multa ui*, and both the Punic and Roman civil wars are foreshadowed.<sup>28</sup> Girard's theory also requires, however, that the community purge its violence by uniting to destroy the sacrificial victim.<sup>29</sup> But no putative Trojan and Latin community unites at the close of the *Aeneid* in animosity toward Turnus. Instead, during the duel the Trojans and Latins are separated into two opposing lines of spectators, with different emotional reactions to the anticipated outcome of the duel: *exclamant Troes trepidique Latini, / arrectaeque amborum acies* (12.730–31).

One response to this problem would be to adopt Girard's argument that later manifestations of the original sacrifice will necessarily obscure and distort it, because ignorance of this first sacrifice is necessary to preserve the harmony it delivers. According to Girard, the revelation that the original victim was an arbitrarily selected human being would undermine the essential conception of the sacrificial victim as a harmful power that

24. Bandera 1994, 147–53.

25. Bandera 1994, 161.

26. Bandera 1994, 153. For a reading that interprets this and other sacrifices differently, see Nicoll 2001.

27. For another analysis of the difficulty of Girardean interpretations of the *Aeneid*, see Smith 1999, 506–8.

28. Alba Longa, 1.271; Punic Wars, e.g., 4.625–29; civil war, e.g., 6.826–35. This point is made by Heinrich 1996, 45–46.

29. Girard 1987, 26.

turns benign once overcome.<sup>30</sup> Thus any aspects of the sacrificial crisis found in the *Aeneid* would be parts of an obscured ritual foundation of Roman culture. Hardie can thus offer a reading of imperial Latin epic based on various elements of the sacrificial mechanism that appear in the poems without the need for Girard's historical narrative.<sup>31</sup>

My reading of exchange relations in the *Aeneid* incorporates an element within the dynamic of conflict that Girard's sacrificial model explicitly excludes, namely the object of contention. For Girard, "acquisitive mimesis," in which parties clash over an object, is replaced by "conflictual mimesis" once "the object has disappeared." In other words, objects of contention become insignificant as the unanimity emerges that allows the selection of a victim against whom all violence can be directed.<sup>32</sup> Hardie treats Aeneas's killing of Turnus as an example of Girardean sacrifice,<sup>33</sup> and Bandera makes it the sacrificial foundation of Roman order, but at the decisive moment individual objects of contention have not disappeared. On the contrary, Pallas's baldric, which Aeneas had temporarily forgotten, dramatically reappears and becomes the proximate cause of Turnus's death. Indeed, the narrator had earlier stressed that Turnus marks himself out for destruction at the instant when he strips the baldric from Pallas's body (10.501–5). In what follows, I will therefore pay due attention to objects of contention such as the baldric of Pallas. Furthermore, as is clear from the discussion so far, I believe it is more productive to treat the mortal interactions with divinities as part of a continuum of socioeconomic relations.

### Failed Reciprocity

Although Vergil provides examples in the *Aeneid* of reciprocity obviating conflict as a normative background, failures of reciprocity dominate the action of the poem, most notably leading to the war that occupies its second half. Two main themes of failed reciprocity run through the poem: violated *hospitium* and deadly gifts. Together these themes color Vergil's epic world as one where the legacy of the past, individual interests, and the spiraling complexity of events tend to overwhelm fragile efforts at reconciliation and the construction of community.

30. Girard 1977, 82–84; Girard 1987, 27, 105–30.

31. See Hardie 1993a, 21 n. 5.

32. Girard 1987, 26.

33. Hardie 1993a, 33–34.

### *Violated Hospitium*

Looming behind Aeneas's attempts at peace in Italy is the legacy of failed reciprocity in the fall of Troy, beginning with the Trojan violation of *hospitium* inherent in Helen's abduction. Vergil's emphasis on this violation stands out by contrast to the positive view of Aeneas's practice of reciprocity offered by Livy, who shows himself sensitive to the social significance of Greco-Roman practices of hospitality.<sup>34</sup> Livy begins his history with reference to Aeneas's exceptional concern for cultivating ties of *hospitium*, recounting how such ties of guest-friendship with the Greeks saved Aeneas at Troy:

iam primum omnium satis constat Troia capta in ceteros saeuitum esse Troianos, duobus, Aeneae Antenorique, et uetusti iure hospitii et quia pacis reddendaeque Helenae semper auctores fuerant, omne ius belli Achiuos abstinuisse.<sup>35</sup>

First of all, everyone agrees that when Troy was captured, the Achaeans slaughtered all the Trojans but refrained from exercising their full rights as victors over two men, Aeneas and Antenor, both due to old ties of guest-friendship and because they had always counseled reconciliation and the return of Helen.

By omitting this part of the legend, Vergil portrays Aeneas as a man of courage who takes charge amid the sack of his city, rather than one whose dependence upon Greek goodwill could be perceived as capitulation.

Whereas Livy emphasizes Aeneas's faithfulness to reciprocal ties at Troy, Vergil provides reminders of the main Trojan violation of reciprocity. We find direct reference to Helen's abduction as late as Book 7, where Latinus's wife, Amata, calls Aeneas a "brigand" (*praedo*, 7.362) and warns that he is likely to make off with Lavinia in just the same way that Paris absconded with Helen.<sup>36</sup> Earlier, Vergil makes a more complex allusion to this Trojan legacy when Aeneas encounters Deiphobus in the underworld and asks how he came to be mutilated. As Deiphobus recounts his humili-

34. Bolchazy 1977, i: "[Livy] appreciated the intrinsic humanizing and civilizing force of the *ius hospitii* [and] he realized that such a force would be a greater factor in contributing to world peace than the virtues referred to on the *clupeus uirtutis* of Augustus [i.e., *uirtus, clementia, iustitia, and pietas*]."

35. Livy 1.1.1, cited in Bolchazy 1977, iii-iv.

36. 7.361-64. Cf. Turnus at 9.141-42 and the comments of Traina 1984b, 325.

ating demise, he casts Helen as the violator of reciprocal bonds in ironic gift language:

intra tecta uocat Menelaum et limina pandit,  
 scilicet id magnum sperans fore munus amanti,  
 et famam exstingui ueterum sic posse malorum.  
 quid moror? inrumpunt thalamo, comes additus una  
 hortator scelerum Aeolides. di, talia Graeis  
 instaure, pio si poenas ore reposco.  
 —(6.525–30)

Into the house she calls Menelaus and flings wide the door, hoping, I doubt not, that her lover would find this great boon, and so the flame of old misdeeds might be blotted out. Why prolong the story? They burst into my chamber; with them comes their fellow counsellor of sin, the son of Aeolus. O gods, with like penalties repay the Greeks, if with pious lips I pray for vengeance!

Although Deïphobus had taken Helen as his wife after the death of Paris, she removes Deïphobus's weapons and then admits Menelaus into his room. Helen thereby enacts a perverse hospitality by giving Deïphobus himself as a great gift (*magnum munus*, 526) to her newly arrived "guest," her former husband. She does this for her immediate gain, hoping to erase the memory of her complicity in Paris's violation of Menelaus's *hospitium* (*famam exstingui*, 527). This episode reflects poorly on Helen but also inevitably recalls the original cause of the conflict in the Trojan violation of *hospitium*. Deïphobus is closely implicated in this violation as Helen's second Trojan husband, and for this reason he continues to bear the marks of his punishment in the underworld as a sort of spectral correlative to Trojan wrongdoing.

In his account, Deïphobus pays for his central role in this crime by being part of a monstrous gift exchange. But Vergil also suggests that the most noxious gift in the poem is likewise a return for the Trojan violation of *hospitium*. We are by now so familiar with Laocoön's fear of Greeks bearing gifts that we tend to overlook how strange it is that the Trojans could consider the Greek-built horse that will destroy their city a "gift" at all. It is not surprising that they might think it a gift to the gods: Aeneas characterizes the horse after the fact as a gift to Minerva (*uotum*, 2.17; *donum* . . . *Mineruae*, 2.31) just as Sinon had done (*dona Mineruae*, 2.17, 2.189). But Laocoön's question, *aut ulla putatis / dona carere dolis*



*Danaum*? (2.43–44), and especially his admonition, *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* (2.49), cast the horse as a gift to the Trojans themselves. This interpretation arises from the picture of multiple Greeks bearing multiple gifts, and the qualification that a Trojan like Laocoön might think to trust them in this situation, but even then (*et*) he should not.<sup>37</sup> Even Laocoön, the most skeptical of the Trojans, characterizes the horse as a gift, and the horse is subsequently brought within the walls, because, as Aeneas reports, the Trojans are all “forgetful and blind with frenzy” (*immemores caecique furore*, 2.244). They are not simply unmindful, but also forgetful that they themselves have violated the norms of *hospitium*, and so are led to revisit upon themselves their own violation of the norms of reciprocity by taking a deadly “gift” within their walls.

### *Fateful Gifts*

The legacy of the Trojan violation of reciprocity in abducting Helen does not end with the destruction of Troy. This is true in the larger sense that the Trojan War sets in motion subsequent events in the epic tradition, including the journey and struggles of Aeneas. But the specific challenges that Aeneas and his company face in the *Aeneid* are informed by this Trojan history as well, such that Aeneas prays to Phoebus for release from it (6.62). The Sybil promptly shows that Aeneas will not get his wish with her prophecy of a reenactment of the Trojan War in Italy (6.83–97). In their attempts to form reciprocal bonds at key points in their journey, the Trojans also experience failure linked with the original Trojan violation through ill-omened gift exchanges.<sup>38</sup>

Among these are the gifts Aeneas gives to Dido (1.647–55), in particular the veil worn by Helen (*uelamen . . . Helenae*, 1.649–50) when she and Paris fled Mycenae for Troy, as well as the scepter of Ilione, Priam’s eldest daughter. Ilione was the wife of Polymestor, the king of Thrace, who murdered her brother Polydorus for his gold. Depending upon the version, Ilione then either murdered her husband or committed suicide.<sup>39</sup> These

37. If Laocoön were simply expressing his mistrust of Greeks giving gifts to the gods in order to harm the Trojans, the word *et* would be unnecessary, because there would have been no original expectation of a positive outcome for the Trojans.

38. Gift objects in the *Aeneid* are richly significant, often presenting counternarratives (Heuzé 1985). A great deal has been written, for example, on the baldrick of Pallas and its imagery. See Putnam 1998, 187–207; Harrison 1998; and Horsfall 2000a, 211–13, with their references. I consider only how gifts are used as part of socioeconomic practices.

39. Austin 1984 ad 1.653.

histories cast a gloomy shadow over Aeneas's gifts,<sup>40</sup> but their resonance is still more specific. Both are associated with gross violations of *hospitium*: Ilione's marriage to Polymestor, who kills his guest-friend for gold (a story which Aeneas tells at 3.49–68); and the ultimate cause of this violation, Paris's theft of his guest-friend's wife, Helen.

Aeneas thus tries to initiate a reciprocal relationship with Dido using gifts that point back to Paris's abduction of Helen and Trojan complicity. Furthermore, Vergil emphasizes Aeneas's difficulties in managing a relationship of *hospitium* with Dido through her addresses to Aeneas. Dido initially calls him *hospes* in earnest (1.753, 4.10), then again as an accusation when she thought he had been something more (4.323), then finally names him a *hostis* (4.424). Aeneas persists in defining himself as a *hospes* against Dido's contrary interpretation of him as her husband,<sup>41</sup> but he cannot revert to this status because of the intimate relationship he has allowed to develop. As in the mythological tradition, so too in the *Aeneid*: Aeneas prefers to manage political and military affairs by establishing social ties.<sup>42</sup> In his encounter with Dido, he mismanages a critical reciprocal relationship for the first time, inadvertently endangering his mission and helping form a nation inimical to his future city.<sup>43</sup> The gifts that Aeneas initially gives Dido anticipate this failure as a Trojan legacy, and subsequent failures will be linked back to Troy through Dido.

The Sybil predicts the difficulties Aeneas will have in forming reciprocal relationships in Italy when she tells him that a "welcoming" or "hosting" wife there will be the cause of conflict for the Trojans (*causa mali tanti coniunx iterum hospita Teucris*, 6.93). In retrospect, it is clear that she means Lavinia will be a new Helen. More specifically, with her words *coniunx hospita* the Sybil evokes the picture of Helen as a host to Paris and his Trojan company in the halls of Menelaus, and so, once again, the memory of the Trojan violation of reciprocal customs. The parallel is not complete, because Aeneas does not snatch Lavinia away from a husband (Turnus is only a suitor), but it does anticipate the difficulties Aeneas will have in forging reciprocal relationships, weighed down as he is with the

40. Austin 1984 ad 1.653 writes that "Aeneas' gifts to Dido could scarcely have been charged with more ominous associations than Helen's *uelamen* and Ilione's *sceptrum*." Putnam 1995, 81, observes that Aeneas "offers to Dido Helen's cloak and the scepter of Ilione, which is to say his presence brings her, from Helen, illicit love leading to her city's symbolic razing by fire, from Ilione, suicide." Cf. Buchheit 1963, 189; Pöschl 1977, 180; and Lyne 1987, 22–23.

41. Gibson 1999.

42. See Traina 1984a, 98 and *passim*.

43. According to Traina 1984a, 98, Aeneas makes a minor deviation from his *pietas* with this mistake.

history of the Trojan violation of *hospitium*. We should also note a second possible signification for the Sybil's phrase *coniunx hospita*. These two words together neatly sum up the disputed status of Dido vis-à-vis Aeneas in their final words to one another: Dido claims she is *coniunx*, Aeneas that she is only *hospita*. This is a secondary echo; the Sybil's earlier prediction of an *alius* . . . *Achilles* (6.89) frames what follows as a new Trojan War. This subtle suggestion nevertheless serves to indicate the continuity between the failures of reciprocity at Troy and Carthage and those to come as he is forced to recapitulate the past.

Aeneas's attempts to establish a lasting reciprocal relationship fail most critically with Latinus. The gifts given on both sides are ill omened, suggesting that they will not assure peace, although this is the initial effect (*talibus . . . donis . . . / . . . pacemque reportant*, 7.285). Through his lieutenant Ilioneus, Aeneas offers Latinus, an aging king (*rex . . . / iam senior*, 7.45–46; *longaevi regis*, 7.166) with a dead son (7.50–51), the scepter, robes, and diadem of Priam (7.245–48), an aging king who saw all his sons killed before dying in a war that destroyed his kingdom.<sup>44</sup> As the parallel suggests, this gift offering represents more than the transfer of Trojan identity to Latin.<sup>45</sup> Latinus, like Priam, will see battle erupt around his city and his walls besieged. He too will be brought low (12.609–13) and watch his champion lose to a besieger in single combat (12.707–8). Aeneas's gift to Latinus thus presages the war that will result from the breaking of their reciprocal bond. Latinus's return gifts provide a subtle secondary indication that his relationship with Aeneas will miscarry. Among these gifts are a team of horses that closely resemble those Diomedes stole from Aeneas in the *Iliad* (5.260–73).<sup>46</sup> Lyne interprets this circumstance as "a wrong . . . righted,"<sup>47</sup> but it is more problematic. The echo conveys the idea that Latinus is giving no gift at all, but rather returning something of his own to Aeneas, voiding the gesture of reciprocal gift giving.

Aeneas gives a last ill-omened gift when he lays a cloak that Dido made upon the body of Pallas before it is borne back to Evander (11.73–75).<sup>48</sup> This

44. Horsfall 2000b ad 7.245 interprets Priam's regalia, together with a cup of Anchises also given by Ilioneus, as rather benign symbols of authority: "Anchises balances Priam, and family, monarchy: the gifts represent continuity of cult and of power, *pietas* towards father, gods and country." Of course the fate of Anchises is also rather dismal: he is torn away from his homeland in his old age and perishes while wandering in exile.

45. The interpretation of Buchheit 1963, 161–62. Cf. Pöschl 1977, 180–81.

46. Lyne 1987, 139.

47. Lyne 1987, 139.

48. Aeneas actually takes up two cloaks made by Dido and may lay one or both on Pallas. On the question of the number of the cloaks and their use, see Lyne 1989, 187–94.

gesture looks forward to the rather visible breakdown of the reciprocal relationship between Aeneas and Evander, in two ways.<sup>49</sup> First, by choosing a gift from Dido, Aeneas connects his action toward Pallas with the flurry of gift activity at Carthage and the eventual collapse of his reciprocal relationship with Dido. Indeed, one of the lines describing the cloaks repeats exactly a line in Book 4 describing a cloak Aeneas received as a gift from Dido.<sup>50</sup>

The second association alludes to a key moment at the close of the *Iliad*. When Aeneas lays a cloak over Pallas's corpse, he recalls the gesture of Achilles covering the body of Hector with the clothes Priam brought as ransom (*Il.* 24.578–91).<sup>51</sup> This Iliadic scene brings an end to the great failures of reciprocity that contributed to and prolonged the war, from the violation of *xenia/hospitium* in the abduction of Helen, to the inability to agree on an Achaean-Trojan exchange to settle the conflict, to the refusal of Achilles to accept the gifts of Agamemnon. Priam brought a great many "gifts" to Achilles for what was in fact the commodity transaction of ransom (*apoina*, 24.555).<sup>52</sup> Achilles' companions, Automedon and Alkimon, unload these from Priam's wagon but leave the two cloaks and a tunic to cover the body of Hector once it has been washed. Achilles shows a certain generosity in allowing this small gift to Priam, just as he does in permitting Priam return alive with the body of Hector, even though the god of commerce himself, Hermes, declares that Achilles himself could have ransomed Priam for three times as much as he received for Hector (24.686–88). By recalling the gesture of Achilles at this moment, Vergil suggests that Aeneas is demonstrating a similar reciprocal generosity toward Evander. But Evander is neither consoled nor satisfied: instead, he grieves bitterly and demands further violence from Aeneas.<sup>53</sup>

Motivated by *pietas*, Aeneas in this way attempts repeatedly to safeguard his people by forming alliances and negotiating for peace, but he fails at every turn. Vergil uses ill-omened gifts and images of failed *hospitium* to suggest that these failures result from a legacy of Trojan abuse of reciprocity. The gifts and failed *hospitium* also contribute to the overall sense in the poem that reciprocal relationships are fragile and beset by complex and persistent problems.

49. Another omen of this breakdown is Evander's allusion to the etymology of the Argiletum area of (the future) Rome with his mention of the "guest-friend Argos" (*hospitis Argi*, 8.346). Argos was killed for plotting against Evander (Gransden 1976 ad 8.346).

50. *fecerat et tenui telas descreuerat auro*, 11.75 = 4.264. See Quinn 1968, 346.

51. See Lyne 1989, 190–92.

52. Wilson 1999.

53. 11.176–79, discussed further in the next chapter.

### *Patronage*

Among the various forms of reciprocity in Roman society, the practice of patronage has received close scrutiny in recent years from social historians.<sup>54</sup> In one formulation, Saller has defined patronage as a relationship that involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services, is personal and has some duration, and is asymmetrical.<sup>55</sup> In the *Aeneid*, as in the Homeric epics, we find few substantial examples of such asymmetrical friendship relations because its heroic society is based on kingship rather than the Roman republican ideal of the citizen. These kings exert influence on their subordinates primarily through command and ties of allegiance, whereas Roman elites engaged in continual, mutually acknowledged trade of goods and services between legally independent parties. Furthermore, heroic epic in the Homeric mold focuses on the words and actions of these kings (the *proelia et reges* of *Ecl.* 5). Vergil tightens focus still further by deemphasizing the middle and lower social ranks to center attention on Aeneas and his peers.<sup>56</sup> In the few instances where Vergil does refer to patronage, it is only as an institution that can ensnare clients into detrimental relationships. Vergil's one explicit mention of patronage comes among the figures of the underworld, where he mixes mythical and contemporary Roman elements, from Cerberus to the soul of Augustus's not-yet-born nephew Marcellus.<sup>57</sup> Among those punished in the underworld appears a patron who has deceived his client (*fraus innexa clienti*, 6.609).<sup>58</sup>

We find a fuller description of a patronage relationship, though without explicit mention of patrons or clients, in the brief description of the character Menoetes, whom Turnus kills in the final battle between Trojans and Latins:

hic [sc. Turnus, neci mittit] fratres Lycia missos et Apollinis agris  
et iuuenem exosum nequiquam bella Menoeten,

54. Studies include Gold 1982, Saller 1982, Wallace-Hadrill 1989, White 1993, and Bowditch 2001. See Wallace-Hadrill 2005, 55–58, for an overview of the changes in the patronage system with the advent of the Principate.

55. Saller 1982, 1. Johnson and Dandeker 1989 have argued that Saller's dyadic model must be expanded to account for the larger complexes of social relations that patronage structures create. Cf. Eilers 2002, 7. Saller's less culture-specific definition is useful here, as it applies to both the Homeric and Roman worlds.

56. Willcock 1983 and Horsfall 1987 discuss the scarcity of upper- and middle-rank warriors.

57. Williams 1972a ad 6.608f.

58. On this phrase see Verboven 2002, 55.

Arcada, piscosae cui circum flumina Lernae  
 ars fuerat pauperque domus nec nota potentum  
 munera, conductaque pater tellure serebat.  
 —(12.516–20)

Turnus kills the brothers sent from Lycia and Apollo's fields, and Menoetes of Arcadia, who in youth loathed warfare in vain: near fish-haunted Lerna's streams had been his craft and humble home, he did not know the patronage of the great, and his father sowed on hired soil.

Some have questioned whether this passage truly deals with patronage,<sup>59</sup> but it clearly presents a contrast between elite reciprocal relations and humbler commodity affairs by juxtaposing words emblematic of the two systems, *munera*, *conductaque*, "gifts, and rented (land)." The juxtaposition crystallizes a basic opposition between reciprocal and commodity exchange, but with characteristic complexity Vergil reverses the typical moral values of each economic mode. Reciprocal exchange proves pernicious to Menoetes because his involvement with the elites who operate according to an economy of gifts and favors draws him into the war he hates and results in his death. By contrast, although his poverty may have forced him to rent land,<sup>60</sup> this commodity relationship to his livelihood left Menoetes free for a time from entangling reciprocal alliances. We do not know how he comes to serve Evander, but because it is unlikely that he kept his independence as a mercenary, he must have formed some tie.

59. With his translation of *nec nota potentum* / *munera* as "he did not know the patronage of the great," Goold sides with those who understand the phrase to mean that it was patronage that Menoetes avoided. His reading follows Servius, Heyne, and Williams 1973 ad loc. But Fowler sees no such suggestion, instead taking the word *munera* to refer to "the burdens borne by the *potentes*, not the duties paid to them by the poor; for a fisherman in a remote spot would not be paying duties to the rich, nor receiving gifts from them" (Fowler 1927, 103). Conington and Nettleship 1963 and Maguinness 1992 ad loc. offer similar readings. Although he prefers this latter reading if we accept *munera*, Fowler's first choice is to accept the alternate reading *limina* for *munera*, indicating that Menoetes never visited the homes of chieftains. Thus, on Fowler's reading, the words *nec nota potentum* / *munera* simply indicate that Menoetes knew nothing of the general duties of the powerful because of his isolation, and they contain no suggestion that he could have been a client of such powerful men. One weakness of Fowler's argument is that Menoetes could not have lived in complete isolation or he would never have been drawn into the orbit of Evander and so found himself in Italy fighting Turnus. On the other hand, as mentioned, patronage relationships in anything like the form they took at Rome are essentially foreign to the political structures of heroic epic.

60. Or his father rented the land. It is not clear whether *pater* in line 520 refers to the father of Menoetes or Menoetes as a father, but the distinction is not important for my argument. See Maguinness 1992 ad 519–20, who with Fowler takes Menoetes as the father.

In so doing Menoetes put himself directly at the mercy of the *potentum munera*, because it is Evander's guest-friend relationship with Aeneas that ultimately places him under the sword of Turnus. With his vignette of Menoetes, then, Vergil draws on the tradition of virtuous thrift, but his picture of patronage overall emphasizes the vulnerability of the lesser party. If Aeneas has difficulty guiding reciprocal relationships to good ends, weaker parties to patronage would seem all the more likely to be disadvantaged or overwhelmed.

### Mercantile Commodity Exchange

As a poor man, Menoetes could be said to have no choice but to participate in ordinary commodity exchange, and this compulsion along with his lower social status may make his enforced thrift seem virtuous. Among the higher-status characters at the center of the *Aeneid*, however, commodity language generally brings with it the stigma of the merchant, because Vergil endows such language with negative associations throughout the poem.

Actual instances of commodity exchange are rare, but characters do use commodity language to convey pejorative judgments. Entellus, for example, urged by Acestes to fight for the boxing prize at the funeral games of Anchises, declares that he has not lost his desire for honor or glory (*non laudis amor nec gloria cessit*, 5.394) and that if he only had his youth, he would not have to be induced to fight for any "price," whether the reward of a bull or any other gifts (*haud equidem pretio inductus pulchroque iuuenco / uenissem, nec dona moror*, 5.399–400). With the word *pretio*, Entellus implies that any material reward, even a gift, would amount to little more than a payment, and that he rejects such enticements in favor of the more noble pursuit of praise and glory. Earlier in the poem, when Aeneas gazes at a depiction of the Trojan war on the temple of Juno at Carthage, he sees Achilles there "selling the body [of Hector] for gold" (*exanimumque auro corpus uendebat Achilles*, 1.484). The description in this passage is conveyed by the words of the narrator, but focalized through Aeneas, so that Troilus becomes an "unfortunate boy" (*infelix puer*, 1.475) and Minerva "inimical" (*non aequae Palladis*, 1.479). The description of Achilles "selling" Hector's body is another such moment of focalization. Aeneas disparages Achilles by interpreting the complex play of ransom payment, clemency, and generosity in the reconciliation with Priam as simply a venal sale. Iarbas later speaks in similar terms of Dido, dismissing her in his complaint to Jupiter as a woman who "founded a tiny city for a price"

(*urbem / exiguam pretio posuit*, 4.211–12). One of the most explicit condemnations of venal behavior occurs during Aeneas's visit to the underworld, when the Sybil describes the crimes of the damned:

uendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem  
imposuit; fixit leges pretio atque refixit.  
—(6.621–22)

This one sold his country for gold, and fastened on her a tyrant lord; he made and unmade laws for a bribe.

These punishments sum up the problem of a commodity exchange under the sign of the merchant, where it is inextricably bound up with the pursuit of individual advantage that disregards any harm to the community. The insistent commodity language (*uendidit*, *auro*, *pretio*) suggests that commodity exchange is not simply one among many possible avenues of wrongdoing chosen by these transgressors, but rather a mode of action that conduces to such crimes.

Vergil plays upon this understanding of commodity exchange in fashioning the character of Sinon, the deceptive Greek who persuades the Trojans to take the giant horse within their walls. For a poet who does not generally deal in the sort of stock characters we find in Roman comedy, Vergil comes closest to the merchant type with his portrayal of Sinon.<sup>61</sup> By tradition, Sinon was a crafty liar, and Aeneas judges him so (*uersare dolos*, 2.62; *dolis instructus et arte Pelasga*; 2.152; *insidiis periurique arte Sinonis*, 2.195). But Vergil adds to Sinon's traditional duplicity a tendency to view the world in mercantile terms. In response to the Trojan insistence that he fully explain the horse, Sinon abjures his former oaths to the Greeks and asks the Trojans to stand by their pledges to him:

tu modo promissis maneat seruataque serues,  
Troia, fidem, si uera feram, si magna rependam.  
—(2.160–61)

But Troy, stand by your promises and, yourself preserved, preserve your faith, if my tidings prove true, and if they pay you a large return.

61. This is of course not to deny that Sinon is also associated with specifically Greek deception, on which see Moskalew 1990.



Sinon is both insisting that he is telling the truth and demonstrating to the Trojans that he is entirely in their power. So much is falsehood, but the form of his entreaty illustrates his true character. Rather than relying on the goodwill that his services would engender, Sinon asks the Trojans for a quid pro quo bargain. Even more telling is the way he ends his request. He begins by asking simply that they stay true to their promises if his words are shown to be true (*si uera feram*), but then adds the additional clarification that the Trojans should reward him if he pays them a large return (*si magna rependam*). When Sinon includes this second condition, he chooses to try to persuade the Trojans in commodity terms, not only because venality is consistent with his self-representation as a traitor, but also precisely because this is the form of deliberation that he finds most natural and meaningful. Together with the repeated references to Sinon's craft and deception, such commodity thinking completes the implied template of the merchant behind Sinon's character.

Indeed, the picture that emerges from Sinon's words here adds in retrospect to the irony of his earlier disingenuous condemnation of the Greek leaders. In a gambit to win Trojan sympathy, Sinon invites the Trojans to kill him, telling them that Ulysses wished for his death and the Atridae would pay greatly for it (*hoc Ithacus uelit et magno mercentur Atridae*, 2.104). At one level, this slander resembles Aeneas's attribution of venal motives to Achilles: no proper Homeric or Vergilian hero would consider directly paying someone else to kill on his behalf any more than he would see himself "selling" the body of a slain opponent back to the enemy. The irony lies in the fact that it is the character most likely to commit such an act, Sinon, who makes this charge. Once again Vergil reveals the mercantile nature of Sinon's thoughts by having him project this mode of thinking onto others.

Vergil models Sinon upon Homer's Dolon, who also undertakes a dangerous mission alone into enemy territory. In Book 10 of the *Iliad*, Dolon agrees to spy on the Achaean ships only after extracting a promise from Hector that he will receive the chariot and horses of Achilles.<sup>62</sup> He is subsequently caught by Diomedes and Odysseus and killed after betraying the dispositions of the Trojan forces.<sup>63</sup> The Homeric poet emphasizes the venality of Dolon by having Hector refer to the reward Dolon accepts as both a gift (*dōron*) and payment (*misthos*).<sup>64</sup>

62. The events are from *Il.* 10.299–464.

63. 10.374–81.

64. 10.304. Homer typically uses *μισθός* to refer to humble wage-earning. At *Il.* 12.435 the word refers to a widow earning a small wage by spinning, and at 21.445, 450, 451, and 457, to

Although the precedent of Dolon implicitly underpins the venality of Sinon, Vergil also deals with Dolon more directly by introducing his son Eumedes as one of the Trojan warriors who falls at the hands of Turnus:

Parte alia media Eumedes in proelia fertur,  
antiqui proles bello praeclara Dolonis,  
nomine auum referens, animo manibusque parentem,  
qui quondam, castra ut Danaum speculator adiret,  
ausus Pelidae pretium sibi poscere currus;  
illum Tydides alio pro talibus ausis  
adfecit pretio nec equis aspirat Achilli.  
hunc procul ut campo Turnus prospexit aperto,  
ante leui iaculo longum per inane secutus  
sistit equos biiugis et curru desilit atque  
semianimi lapsoque superuenit, et pede collo  
impresso dextrae mucronem extorquet et alto  
fulgentem tingit iugulo atque haec insuper addit:  
“en agros et, quam bello, Troiane, petisti,  
Hesperiam metire iacens: haec praemia, qui me  
ferro ausi temptare, ferunt, sic moenia condunt.”  
—(12.346–61)

Elsewhere Eumedes rides into the middle of the fray, war-famed offspring of old Dolon, in name renewing his grandfather, in heart and hand his father, who of old, for going as a spy to the Danaan camp, dared to ask as his reward the chariot of Peleus's son; but the son of Tydeus paid him a different reward for his daring and he does not aspire to Achilles' horses. When Turnus saw him far off on the open plain, first following him with light javelin through the long space between them, he halts his twin-yoked horses and leaps from his chariot, descends on the fallen, dying man and, planting his foot on his neck, wrests the sword from his hand, dyes the glittering blade deep in his throat, and adds these words besides: “See, Trojan, the fields and that Hesperia that you sought in war; lie there and measure them out! This is the reward of those who dare to tempt me with the sword; so do they establish their walls!”

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the wages Laomedon denied to Poseidon and Apollo after their work on the walls of Troy. Cf. *Od.* 10.84, 18.358, and the discussion of von Reden 1995, 89–90.

Vergil adopts the Homeric technique of using brief descriptions of minor warriors killed to evoke pathos, and here he puts economic language to work in such a description to create a minor tragedy in two stages. At first, we learn how Eumedes has risen beyond the status of his father. Vergil emphasizes the mercantile nature of Dolon in seeking the horses of Achilles by twice repeating the word *pretium*, first describing the “price” Dolon was seeking for his exploit, and then the ironic “price” he received in return from Diomedes for his overreaching (*ausus*). This repeated emphasis within a fifteen-line scene stands out in comparison to the Homeric passage, where over the course of 165 lines the poet uses the equivalent word, *misthos*, only once. By contrast with his father, Eumedes seems to be in every respect a noble warrior, renowned in battle (*proles bello praeclara*). In one sense, this amelioration from father to son is part of the overall ennobling of the Trojan cause that has Diomedes speaking reverentially of Aeneas’s prowess in battle (11.283–84). The measurement of Eumedes against Dolon, of noble warrior against mercantile father, imparts a sense of the success that Eumedes has achieved in the traditional Homeric goal of outstripping one’s father.

In the second stage, however, Turnus’s words imply that Eumedes, in the manner of a tragic protagonist, cannot escape his father’s legacy. Turnus accuses Eumedes of fighting simply for gain, the equivalent of Dolon’s *pretium*, which Turnus mockingly calls *praemia*, rather than any noble cause. Turnus also calls Eumedes and his fellow Trojans “rash,” using the word *ausi*, which recalls the overreaching greed of Eumedes’ father, who was described with the word *ausus* just a few lines earlier. These parallels between the behavior of Dolon and the alleged behavior of Eumedes give to Turnus’s invitation to Eumedes to “measure out” (*metire*, 360) Italian land the sense of a mercantile calculation of property. Vergil’s economic language thus endows this passage with dramatic irony: Eumedes strives to break free of his father’s legacy but seems to fall back to it at the moment of his death.

In the cases considered so far, we have seen how greed and commodity exchange interact reflexively to form a single mercantile complex that is socially detrimental. In characters such as Sinon and Dolon, greed is the desire that impels the individual forward and commodity exchange the form of action the individual takes to attain the desired object. At the same time, there is a parallel suggestion that commodity practice conditions a habitual striving for maximum profit. It is of course true that greed need not be expressed through the exchange behaviors or personal consumption that I have defined as constituting economic behavior for the

purposes of this study. The most direct way to act on greed is simply to seize resources from others with as much force as necessary. As a strategy for satisfying greed, rapacious violence is even more dangerous to society than acquisitive mercantilism.

Nevertheless, Vergil emphasizes that this greater crime also violates and disrupts reciprocal relationships. The poet saves his most explicit denunciation of greed in the *Aeneid* for the circumstances of Polydorus' death. Before the fall of Troy, Priam sent Polydorus with a great quantity of gold as an ambassador to the Thracian king Polymestor, who, once he learned of the reversal of Trojan fortunes, slew Polydorus in order to take the gold (*Polydorum obtruncat et auro / ui potitur*, 3.55–56). These circumstances lead Polydorus himself to call Thrace a "greedy land" (*litus auarum*, 3.44) and Aeneas to exclaim, "To what crime do you not drive the hearts of men, accursed hunger for gold?" (*quid non mortalia pectora cogis, / auri sacra fames?*, 3.56–57). In his account, Aeneas emphasizes that Priam had ties of guest-friendship with Polymestor (*hospitium*, 3.15) that were fouled (*pollutum hospitium*, 3.61). The crime is all the more foul because these reciprocal ties should have established enduring peace between the Trojans and Thracians. Aeneas learns of these circumstances on his first attempt to found a new Troy in Thrace, when he tries to pluck tree limbs to burn for a sacrifice and, seeing blood run from the torn branches, discovers that the tree is Polydorus transformed. The greed and violations of *hospitium* in this scene thus contribute to the ill-omened nature of Aeneas's effort to found a new city near Troy.

The situation of Camilla is similar to that of Polymestor in that greed (*femineo praedae et spoliolum . . . amore*, 11.782) leads to death. The Volscian Camilla pursues the Trojan Chloereus for his rich war gear but in her obsession leaves herself defenseless and is killed by a spear. Here again we find the suggestion that such greed leads to the violation of a reciprocal relationship. The narrator surmises that Camilla plans either to dedicate the spoils of Chloereus to the gods or to "flaunt herself in golden spoil" (*sive ut templis praefigeret arma / Troia, captiuo sive ut se ferret in auro*, 11.778–79). Even before she is killed, the very fact that her desire to keep the spoils competes with her duty to dedicate them reveals a dangerous lack of restraint. Her thinking contrasts with Aeneas's dedication of his spoils to Mars (10.541–42, 11.5–8) and aligns her instead with Turnus, who seals his doom by keeping Pallas's baldric.<sup>65</sup> The cases of both Polydorus and Camilla, which lack significant commodity language, illustrate that

65. Hornsby 1966 and Horsfall 2000a, 166–67, 205.

greed can undo reciprocal bonds when it is acted upon directly, without the mediation of a socioeconomic type like the merchant.

### Waste and Luxury

To develop a complete picture of the economy of the *Aeneid*, we must consider not only how objects are acquired, but also how they are used. Like exchange behavior, such use comes under moral scrutiny when it is excessive, either in general terms as waste or when directed specifically toward individual pleasure as luxurious indulgence. The point I wish to make regarding waste in the *Aeneid* is essentially a negative one for purposes of later comparison with the *Civil War* and *Thebaid*, namely that although Vergil illustrates the problem of waste, he does not thematize it as Lucan and Statius do. It is certainly true that we find many instances in the *Aeneid* of what we might describe as waste, including the destruction of Troy; the death of Dido; the short-lived youths Euryalus, Pallas, and Lausus; pathetic scenes such as the slaughter of the Latin cavalry shut out of their city (11.868–95); and indeed all of the victims of the war for Italy, which Aeneas declares need not have happened (11.108–19). But in my reading I find nothing in the *Aeneid* analogous to the devices used by Lucan and Statius (apostrophe, repeated vocabulary) to call similar attention to the process of waste.<sup>66</sup>

Vergil's choice not to focus on the process of waste stems from his adherence to republican socioeconomic values. As we have seen so far, despite the inability of reciprocal ties to obviate conflict in the *Aeneid*, Vergil does represent the effort to create such ties as virtuous, especially through the repeated efforts of his *pius* protagonist Aeneas (as well as Anchises). Although the type of the generous man dominates the poem in this way, the merchant suffers his usual infamy, and the prodigal and the thrifty man hardly appear. In other words, the socioeconomic view on offer in the *Aeneid* is a rather purely aristocratic one, which acknowledges but leaves in the background potential abuses of reciprocity through prodigality and bribery and the reality of aristocratic involvement in commodity exchange that Cicero accommodates in *On Duties*. We could imagine a different approach, still far short of Lucan, where, for example, those punished in the

66. Though this is certainly not the only way Vergil could have thematized waste, it may be worth noting that his uses of the verb *consumo* have little to do with it: at 2.795, the night is used up; at 5.527, Acestes' arrow bursts into flame and is consumed; and at 7.112, 116, and 125 the word is used of the fulfillment of Celaeno's prophecy that the Trojans would eat their tables, a circumstance that turns out well and which shows, if anything, a certain frugality.

underworld for bribery might be said to have given “gifts” to corrupt the state, or, as in the *Iliad*,<sup>67</sup> we might see some warriors buy supplies. But this is not the path Vergil chooses.

Thematizing waste would be inconsistent with the particularly pure aristocratic socioeconomic projection that Vergil creates in the *Aeneid*, because to attend to waste as such is, in effect, to take a commodity perspective that this aristocratic view does not allow. To illustrate this point, consider briefly the opening of Lucan’s *Bellum Ciuile*, where the narrator laments that a great deal of foreign land could have been secured for Rome with the blood squandered on civil war (*heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari / hoc quem ciuiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae*, 1. 13–14). The narrator clearly represents blood as a commodity in this complaint, but such a commodity view is also necessarily inherent in the very idea of waste expressed here: to lament that an object is wasted frames it as a potentially productive resource that has been misused. Vergil is willing to explore commodity attitudes among his characters, but he is not willing to present those attitudes as normative through the voice of the narrator, as Lucan does.

Conversely, Vergil does call attention to the problem of luxury on several occasions. Perhaps the most direct condemnation is Evander’s injunction to Aeneas to “spurn riches” (*contemnere opes*, 8.364). Evander’s acknowledged virtue suggests that the sentiment should stand as normative more broadly within the poem. Apart from the problematic luxury of Dido’s Carthage, we also find the implicit condemnation of the luxury and drunkenness of the Latins in their lax circumvallation of the Trojan stronghold (9.163–67, 316–19, 349–50) and Tarchon’s reproach to his Etruscans for their indulgence in dancing and feasting (11.732–40). Finally, Vergil has two characters, Iarbas and Numanus Remulus, condemn the Trojans for their Eastern luxury. Iarbas complains of Aeneas’s supposed eunuch servants, Eastern dress, and perfumed hair (4.216–17). Numanus delivers an extended speech that contrasts the simple hardiness of the Italians with the decadent luxury of the Trojans, who wear embroidered clothing dyed with saffron and purple, sleeved tunics, and beribboned caps (9.614–16), and who delight at “indulging” in idleness and dancing (*desidiaie cordi, iuuat indulgere choreis*, 9.615). Numanus’s speech, at a pivotal moment for the besieged Trojans, brings the problem of luxury to particular prominence.

Condemnations of luxury are common in Roman writing,<sup>68</sup> but they

67. 7.472–75.

68. Edwards 1993, 176.

need further explanation in Vergil's epic. Within a culture that places a high value on reciprocal behaviors, luxury can be seen as an extension of reciprocity and so a lesser fault than vices involving commodity exchange. Aristotle displays exactly this sort of thinking in his judgment of the relative blame to be assigned to the prodigal and the miser. He writes of the prodigal that "such a person seems to be quite a lot better than an ungenerous person, since he is easily cured, both by growing older and by poverty, and is capable of reaching the intermediate condition. For he has the features proper to the generous person, since he gives and does not take, though he does neither rightly or well."<sup>69</sup> Because luxury is in effect prodigality toward oneself, it too can be understood as a form of behavior that proceeds from a desire to give (the gratuitous element in reciprocity) but is not done well. Yet the greater clamor of Roman moralists against luxury suggests they judged it worse than prodigality, perhaps in part because, unlike ordinary waste, it involves excess sensual gratification, which further corrupts the giver, or simply because luxury meant greater spending on the individual rather than for society. Whatever their reasons, the continuity of luxury with virtuous reciprocal activity means that, unlike a complaint about waste, it will not disturb the thoroughly aristocratic socioeconomic projection of Vergil's epic. Yet to say that Vergil limits himself to illustrating a subset of the attitudes and behaviors comprehended by Roman economic morality is not to say that he avoids confronting its potential contradictions. On the contrary, his protagonist, Aeneas, is a study in these contradictions.

69. *Eth. Nic.* 1121a20, trans. of T. Irwin, 1985.



## CHAPTER TWO

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### Juno's Agents and the Negotiations of Aeneas

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil defines a range of socioeconomic positions, locating the mercantile Juno at one end and the generous Aeneas at the other. This chapter investigates the poem's major figures as steps along this gradient and ultimately demonstrates Vergil's endorsement of aristocratic socioeconomic values as well as his profound reservations about their efficacy.

#### Juno

In Book 7, the hinge point of the *Aeneid*, when Juno begins to incite the warfare that will occupy the latter half of the poem, she speaks in harsh commodity terms of her desire to harm Aeneas and his Trojans. The survey of the previous chapter makes it clear how striking it is for Juno to declare that she will extract a "fee" (*mercede*, 7.317) for Aeneas's progress.<sup>1</sup> No other divinity in the poem uses such explicit commodity language. It strongly assimilates Juno with mercantile characters such as Sinon.

Juno's declaration of her plans in commodity terms contrasts starkly with the scene that precedes it. She is venting her wrath in response to Aeneas's attempt to establish a friendship with Latinus, which concludes in temporary success, expressed in Vergil's most explicit formulation of the purpose of reciprocal exchange:

talibus Aeneadae donis dictisque Latini  
sublimes in equis redeunt pacemque reportant.  
—(7.284–85)

1. I cite the entire passage at the opening of the introduction.



With such words and gifts from Latinus, the sons of Aeneas, mounted on their horses, return carrying back peace.

By juxtaposing these two scenes, Vergil establishes a contrast at the highest level of narrative action between Aeneas in the role of generous man and Juno's mercantile mentality.

As Juno continues her plans to stir up war, she summons the help of Allecto:

hunc mihi da proprium, uirgo sata Nocte, laborem,  
hanc operam, ne noster honos infractae cedat  
fama loco, neu conubiis ambire Latinum  
Aeneadae possint Italosue obsidere finis.  
tu potes unanimes armare in proelia fratres  
atque odiis uersare domos, tu uerbera tectis  
funereasque inferre faces, tibi nomina mille,  
mille nocendi artes. fecundum concute pectus,  
dissice compositam pacem, sere crimina belli;  
arma uelit poscatque simul rapiatque iuuentus.  
—(7.331–40)

Grant me, maiden daughter of Night, this service, a boon all my own, that my honor and glory not yield overmastered, and that the sons of Aeneas be not able to cajole Latinus with wedlock or beset the borders of Italy. You can arm for strife brothers of one soul, and overturn homes with hate; you can bring under the roof the lash and funeral torch; you have a thousand names, a thousand means of ill. Rouse your fertile bosom, shatter the pact of peace, sow seeds of wicked war! In the same hour let the men crave, demand, and seize the sword!

In her first words to Allecto, Juno uses an unusual phrase from the world of Roman finance, *da proprium* ( . . . *laborem*), 7.331, to ask for help. The expression *dare proprium* means “to give outright” and is typically contrasted with the phrase *dare mutuum*, meaning “to lend.”<sup>2</sup> Juno commands Allecto to yield her services so that Juno can have them as “her own” (*proprium*).<sup>3</sup> Juno's choice of words both confirms her mercantile disposition

2. Williams 1973 ad 7.331. So at Plaut. *Trin.* 1051, Stasimus observes *si quoi mutuom quid dederis, fit pro proprio perditum*.

3. See Horsfall 2000b ad 7.331.

and further defines it. If Juno had asked Allecto to “lend” her help (*dare mutuum*), this would have suggested that she was asking for a service she was prepared to repay. But the command *da proprium* indicates that she expects Allecto to simply forfeit her services. In her role as queen of the gods, Juno is free to command lesser divinities such as Allecto, but when Vergil marks off the phrase *da proprium* before the caesura, he frames the situation instead as a commodity transaction. Juno demands the maximum bargain she is allowed to achieve for her own best interests, namely, something for nothing, with an explicit denial of any promise of future return.

Vergil’s representation of Juno’s exchange behavior contrasts with one of her principal roles in Roman society. The temple of Juno Moneta on the Capitoline Hill served as the repository of standards of measurement and historical records and also as the site of Roman coin production. In these capacities Juno represented a benign force that supported the Republic by ensuring the trustworthiness of past events and current beneficial transactions.<sup>4</sup> The close of the *Aeneid* holds the promise that Juno will eventually accept the glory and dominion of Rome, assuming her historical role in the Capitoline triad along side Jupiter and Minerva as guardian of the Roman people.<sup>5</sup> Just as Vergil elaborates Juno’s hostility to the Roman cause as a prelude to her conversion, so too he endows Juno with a malignant mercantile nature that will be reversed when she becomes the guarantor of honest and frugal commodity transactions at Rome carried out through measured and certified coinage.

By emphasizing this reversal at the center of his epic, Vergil stresses the importance of Juno’s mercantile character for the incitement of the war in Italy, and he anticipates the fact that she and others who share this way of thinking will pose a significant challenge to Aeneas. But Vergil also uses Juno’s exchange behavior as one of the warp threads binding together the whole of his epic narrative. Her wrathful desire to vindicate perceived slights to her honor (1.15–32) drives the action of the poem, from her attacks on Aeneas in Book 1 to her final accommodation with Jupiter.<sup>6</sup> But we also find in these opening and closing scenes evidence of the same commodity thinking Juno reveals in her encounter with Allecto. In her opening speech, after the narrator’s account of the causes of her anger, Juno asks herself whether she must really submit to the destiny of Aeneas and allow the Trojans to reach Italy:

4. Meadows and Williams 2001, 48.

5. 12.791–842.

6. On this arc, see Feeney 1984.

mene incepto desistere uictam,  
 nec posse Italia Teucrorum auertere regem?  
 quippe uetor fatis. Pallasne exurere classem  
 Argiuom atque ipsos potuit sommergere ponto,  
 unius ob noxam et furias Aiakis Oilei?  
 ipsa Iouis rapidum iaculata e nubibus ignem  
 disiecitque rates euertitque aequora uentis,  
 illum expirantem transfixo pectore flammam  
 turbine corripuit scopuloque infixit acuto;  
 ast ego, quae diuum incedo regina, Iouisque  
 et soror et coniunx, una cum gente tot annos  
 bella gero. et quisquam numen Iunonis adoret  
 praeterea, aut supplex aris imponet honorem?  
 —(I.37–49)

What! I resign my purpose, baffled, and fail to turn from Italy the Teucrian king! The fates, doubtless, forbid me! Had Pallas power to burn up the Argive fleet and sink the sailors in the deep, because of one single man's guilt, and the frenzy of Ajax, son of Oileus? Her own hand hurled from the clouds Jove's swift flame, scattered their ships, and upheaved the sea in tempest; but him, as with pierced breast he breathed forth flame, she caught in a whirlwind and impaled on a spiky crag. Yet I, who move as queen of gods, at once sister and wife of Jove, with one people am warring these many years. And will any still worship Juno's godhead or humbly lay sacrifice upon her altars?

Juno focuses intently on her personal concerns in this speech, an emphasis we can discern more easily by comparison with Horace's treatment of Juno in the same situation. Horace imagines Juno's anger against the Trojans as resulting from moral outrage at the misdeeds of Paris and Laomedon; Vergil's Juno, however, far from enforcing universal norms of justice, is concerned only with her own status.<sup>7</sup> Paris was the most infamous violator of *hospitium* in the literary tradition.<sup>8</sup> Horace's Juno is correspondingly offended by the Trojan violation of *hospitium* in the abduction of Helen, referring to Paris as a *famosus hospes* (*Carm.* 3.3.26). Vergil's narra-

7. Lyne 1987, 94–96.

8. Shorey and Laing 1919 ad *Carm.* 1.15.2 and 3.3.26 give comparanda: *Il.* 13.626, Aesch. *Ag.* 401, Eur. *Tro.* 866, Prop. 3.32.7.

tor mentions only Juno's vexation at Paris's judgment (1.27). In the *Aeneid*, the Trojan violation of *hospitium* appears nowhere in the elaboration of Juno's motivations, neither in the narrator's account (1.18–28) nor in Juno's own speech. This marked absence suggests that Juno is not concerned with upholding general standards of morality by enforcing the oaths that bind reciprocal relationships, but concentrates instead on her own desires and how to attain them.

Juno reveals her disregard for true reciprocity when she suborns the minor god Aeolus. Her enlistment of Aeolus early in Book 1 prefigures her commands to Allecto in the analogous opening of the poem's second half in Book 7.<sup>9</sup> When she wants Aeolus to "strike violence into his winds" (*incute uim uentis*, 1.69) in order to overwhelm Aeneas and the Trojans at sea,<sup>10</sup> Juno does not make reference to the goodwill of any existing relationship. Instead, she attempts to buy the compliance of Aeolus with a literal quid pro quo, telling him that she will give him the nymph Deiopea as a bride *meritis pro talibus* (1.74), that is, in exchange for his services. The mercantile nature of Juno's proposed exchange stands out all the more if we compare her offer with the epic model upon which it is based. In Book 14 of the *Iliad*, Hera enlists the god Sleep to overwhelm Zeus so that the Achaeans can make gains against the Trojans without the thunder god's noticing. Like Juno, Hera offers a bride to her subordinate, the Grace Pasithea (14.275–76). But unlike Juno, she specifically mentions the gratitude that she will feel toward Sleep for the rest of time (*charin ēmata panta*, 14.235) and calls the golden throne she offers him a "gift" (literally "gifts," *dōra*, 14.238).

In Vergil's version, it is not Juno but Aeolus who speaks of a reciprocal relationship:

tuus, o regina, quid optes  
 explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est.  
 tu mihi, quodcumque hoc regni, tu sceptrā Iouemque  
 concilias, tu das epulis accumbere diuum,  
 nimborumque facis tempestatumque potentem.  
 —(1.76–80)

Your task, O queen, is to search out your desire; my duty is to do your bidding. To your grace I owe all this my realm, to your grace my scepter.

9. Otis 1963, 322.

10. Translation from Williams 1972a ad 1.69.

tre and Jove's favor; you grant me a couch at the feasts of the gods, and make me lord of clouds and storms.

Aeolus must obey the commands of his queen (*regina . . . iussa*), but he also invokes a past reciprocal relationship by mentioning the good services that Juno and Jupiter have done him. Why does he bother mentioning these services if he must simply obey Juno's command in any case? Aeolus knows that by acceding to Juno's request he may violate the strict limits (*foedere certo*, 1.62) Jupiter has placed on his control of the winds. He therefore resists accepting her request in its commodity form, since this would mean that Juno is under no further obligation to him after yielding Deiopea. Aeolus flatteringly attributes to Juno the grant of kingship actually conferred by Jupiter (*pater omnipotens . . . regemque dedit*, 1.60–62) in order to call into being an ongoing past reciprocal relationship with her, of which this transaction and future obligations should be a continuation. By reframing this transaction as part of a continuing relationship, Aeolus tries to ensure that Juno will protect him from the punishment he expects (and indeed receives: Neptune later promises to make Aeolus's palace the limit of his power, 1.140–41). Unfortunately for Aeolus, there is no indication that his subtle attempt at negotiation succeeds. After this offer of a reward for services to Aeolus, Juno herself proceeds to simply demanding that Allecto yield her aid, exposing more fully her mercantile nature as circumstances become more urgent.

Later in the poem, we find that Juno's initial claim that she must punish the Trojans for their supposed insults or lose status (*honorem*, 1.49) is unfounded. These putative insults have not diminished the honors she receives from the Carthaginians, even though the artwork on Juno's own temple in Carthage attests that they were aware of the events of the war.<sup>11</sup> Nor is the cult of Juno languishing among the Latins.<sup>12</sup> Juno's campaign therefore appears designed less to stave off disgrace than to gain more gifts and commensurately greater status. She achieves this end in her final reconciliation scene,<sup>13</sup> where Jupiter rewards her amply with the promise that the Trojans and Latins together will grant her more gifts than any other nation (*nec gens ulla tuos aeque celebrabit honores*, 12.840).<sup>14</sup> Up to this

11. Dido sacrifices to Juno at 1.446–49.

12. Allecto assumes the form of a priestess of Juno in order to approach Turnus (7.419), and he places his trust in Juno (7.438–39).

13. On which more generally, see Johnson 1976, 123–34, and Feeney 1984.

14. Williams 1972a ad 1.49 comments that *honor* is frequently used for “offerings,” but it

point Juno spurns the gifts of Aeneas (3.547) and refuses to relent in her persecution of the Trojans, but immediately after these final words from Jupiter she goes off delighted, quitting the heavens, abandoning Turnus, and disappearing from the poem (12.840–42). Juno thus transgresses ordinary commodity forms of divine-mortal interaction by conceiving of sacrifice as an opportunity to maximize personal gain.

In sum, Juno embodies disorder,<sup>15</sup> in part through her disruptive participation in exchange. In this respect, Juno has a structural role in the *Aeneid* similar to that of the Iliadic Achilles, who extends the Trojan War by refusing the gifts that would reconcile him with Agamemnon.<sup>16</sup> Achilles is accused of stubbornness;<sup>17</sup> in Book 12 of the *Aeneid*, Jupiter expresses his astonishment that Juno can resist the inevitable settlement for so long.<sup>18</sup> But Juno surpasses Achilles in not only prolonging but also provoking war, and she achieves her desired gain without transcending it, while Achilles ultimately shows generosity in his dealings with Priam.<sup>19</sup>

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is also used more broadly of gifts that bring honor, e.g., of prizes in the games, 5.347. Dyson 2001, 129, notes the parallel between the *honorem* Juno seeks in Book 1 and the *honores* she receives in Book 12 and sees in this the turning of Aeneas's *pietas* into a darker form that will serve Juno in the future.

15. Horsfall 1973–74, 130.

16. Wilson 1999.

17. As when Patroclus tells Achilles that he must have been born from sea and stone to take so little pity on the sufferings of the Achaeans, *Il.* 16.33–35.

18. 12.793–806.

19. Dyson 2001 approaches Juno's role in sacrificial ritual from a different but complementary perspective to the one offered here. She contends that we find in the poem a repeated failure of sacrifice structured upon the killing ritual of the cult of Diana Nemorensis. Just as this ritual required the killing of the current priest, the Rex Nemorensis, by the one who sought to replace him, so too the killings in the *Aeneid*, in particular the death of Turnus and the anticipated death of Aeneas, constitute an endless ritual cycle of violence. Juno invites this cycle because she is gratified by the continuous human sacrifices it produces (Dyson 2001, 18, 25, 133–47). Allusion to the rite of the Rex Nemorensis forms a supporting counterpoint to the general failure of reciprocity. Frazer, whose observations on the cult of Diana at Nemi constitute the starting point of Dyson's work, had himself noted that the rite is exceptional in Roman practice (Frazer 1996, 2), in part because, along with funeral *munera*, it represents a reciprocal religious practice in which discord among mortals is inherently the price of concord with the gods. But in both of these cases, the mortal violence required to satisfy the gods is limited either geographically (to the sacred grove near Aricia or the arena) or socially, to non-citizens. Thus, inasmuch as Juno and the other divinities apply the logic of these rites to aristocratic characters of the *Aeneid* with no respect to any geographic limit, they are perverting a form of reciprocity by the ritual strictures meant to contain the violence it involves. Vergil presents a similarly horrific breaking of ritual boundaries on a smaller scale when the peace treaty of Book 12 is disrupted: Messapus kills Aulestes on the altar meant for the treaty sacrifice and uses an expression from the arena, *hoc habet*, to declare that Aulestes has "had it" (12.289–96; see Conington and Nettleship 1963 ad 12.296). At this moment, the violence

## Dido

Juno's influence over Carthage suggests that Aeneas will have difficulty depending upon his strategy of forming reciprocal alliances to manage his encounter there. Dido, the ruler of Carthage, is herself a queen, like Juno, and she reveres Juno above all other gods (*maxima Iuno*, 4.371), so we might expect some resemblance in the economic behavior of the two. Yet there are crucial differences: just as Dido has a more complex emotional life, so too the socioeconomic aspects of her character are more complex. Whereas Juno actively pursues gain, Dido lapses into atavistic mercantile behavior through her role as representative of the past and future of Carthage.<sup>20</sup> The socioeconomic dysfunctions of Carthage in the *Aeneid* contribute to the city's role as an "Anti-Rome" and to Aeneas's failed encounter with Dido.<sup>21</sup>

The first indication that Carthage will deviate from Roman economic norms comes when Venus, disguised as a Carthaginian girl, relates to Aeneas the foundation of the Punic city. Vergil chooses to suppress the role of money in the story of Aeneas's flight from Troy,<sup>22</sup> but he has Venus speak explicitly of Dido's purchase of land for Carthage:

deuenero locos, ubi nunc ingentia cernes  
moenia surgentemque nouae Karthaginis arcem,

---

of sacrifice has gone beyond the bounds of animal to human, and that of the arena has broken forth into the larger world, both to the detriment of a high-status mortal who should not have had to confront them. But although divine forces lie behind this and other enactments of corrupted reciprocal ritual in the *Aeneid*, a broader consideration of forms of reciprocity in the poem together with antithetical commodity exchange allows us to see how the ethical engagement of individual characters in this dynamic transcends ritual logic.

20. Starks 1999 argues that Vergil refrains from applying negative stereotypes of Carthaginians to Dido and instead makes Aeneas act with the faithlessness and cruelty that Romans attributed to the Punic people. As I discuss further, Dido's mercantile features are an exception. Syed 2005, 143–74, surveys this aspect of Dido's character and her exchange relations with Aeneas, and my discussion recapitulates some of her observations. One of her key conclusions is that Dido's role as a woman and lover provides a parallel motivation with her Punic nature, but that the former tends to overshadow the latter (171).

21. See Buchheit 1963, 173–89, and Horsfall 1973–74. This opposition is not absolute, however. Reed 2007, 98–104 et passim, demonstrates Vergil's assimilation of Trojans to Carthaginians as eastern exiles and in other respects.

22. According to the early Roman epic poet Naevius, Aeneas and his companions carried gold with them as they fled from Troy, Fr. 5 Morel. I discuss the implications for the portrait of Aeneas later in this chapter.

mercatique solum, facti de nomine Byrsam,  
 taurino quantum possent circumdare tergo.  
 —(*Aeneid* 1.365–68)

They came to the place where today you will see the huge walls and rising citadel of new Carthage, and bought ground—Byrsa they called it therefrom—as much as they could encompass with a bull's hide.

At one level, the story fulfills its function simply as an etiological folk tale. Yet it also confirms from the very introduction of Carthage the Roman conception of the city as mercantile. This is the sole literal mention of buying and selling in the poem. With this conspicuous departure from the decorous tone already established, Vergil prepares his audience for a conflict between Roman and Carthaginian values that will play out in economic terms.

This conflict begins to emerge later in Book 1. Juno expresses her love for Carthage, but Venus fears for what Aeneas will experience there, as we see in her address to her son Cupid:

nunc Phoenissa tenet Dido blandisque moratur  
 uocibus, et uereor, quo se Iunonia uertant  
 hospitia; haud tanto cessabit cardine rerum.  
 —(1.670–72)

Phoenician Dido now holds him, staying him with soft words, and I dread what may be the outcome of Juno's hospitality; at such a turning point of fortune she will not be idle.

Why does Venus refer to Aeneas's reception at Carthage as *Iunonia hospitia*?<sup>23</sup> The mention of Juno suggests that she was responsible for diverting Aeneas there to further the cause of Carthage at the expense of Rome.<sup>24</sup> Venus's words are therefore full of irony: Juno scarcely has proper hospitality in mind. But Venus also alludes to another concern when she refers to Dido's Phoenician heritage. This is the first time in the poem that Dido

23. Vergil may use the plural *hospitia* for metrical reasons, but the choice of the plural also raises the question of what "kinds of hospitality" Juno and Dido will present to Aeneas. See Austin 1984 ad 1.672.

24. Buchheit 1963, 70, and Horsfall 1973–74, 133.



is called *Phoenissa*.<sup>25</sup> Even though at the beginning of her encounter with Aeneas in Book 1 Dido demonstrates a full knowledge of the protocols of hospitality,<sup>26</sup> Venus nevertheless fears that Aeneas cannot have a successful reciprocal relationship with the Phoenicians, whose reputation as a mercantile nation stretches back to Homer.<sup>27</sup>

This reputation contributed to making “Carthaginian” a byword for “treacherous” among the Romans,<sup>28</sup> who believed that traders were necessarily deceptive. The emphasis on money and commerce in Dido’s story thus does not bode well.<sup>29</sup> Dido’s brother, Pygmalion, kills her husband, Sychaeus, who was the “richest in gold of all the Phoenicians” (*ditissimus auri/Phoenicum*, 1.343–44),<sup>30</sup> because he was “blinded by lust for gold” (*auri caecus amore*, 1.349). Sychaeus tells Dido in a dream of a secret hoard of gold and silver (*ignotum argenti pondus et auri*, 1.359), and her fleeing Tyrians load their ships with gold (*onerantque auro*, 1.363). When Dido herself buys land to found Carthage, she is mocked by Iarbas (with the word *pretio* at 4.212).

We might think that such mentions of money would be necessary to tell the story of flight into exile, except that they are completely absent from the parallel narrative of Aeneas’s departure from Troy. Likewise, Dido’s purchase of land in a commodity transaction contrasts with Latinus’s later grant of land to Aeneas as a gift to initiate a reciprocal relationship (7.260–61, 11.316–23).<sup>31</sup> Dido’s history allows us to understand more fully Venus’s concern for the *Iunonia hospitium* Aeneas will encounter in Carthage: with a Phoenician as the agent of Juno’s *hospitium*, any reciprocal relationship seems doubly bound to fail.

Indeed, when Aeneas and his companions arrive on African shores, even before Venus expresses her concerns to Cupid, we learn that Dido’s Carthaginians are not by nature inclined to offer any sort of *hospitium*. Jupiter must send Mercury to ensure that the Carthaginians make this elementary gesture of friendship (*utque nouae pateant Karthaginis arces/hospitio Teucris*, 1.298–99) rather than repelling the Trojans. Even then, the Trojans receive rough treatment and are denied *hospitium*, as Ilioneus complains when he is granted an audience with Dido:

25. The other instances are 1.714, 4.348, 4.529, and 6.450.

26. Khan 2002.

27. *Il.* 23.744.

28. See Heinze 1993, 50 n. 9, and Horsfall 1990, 127.

29. Horsfall 1990, 135.

30. *Auri* is Huet’s proposal for the manuscript’s *agri*, an emendation Mynors accepts but toward which Horsfall 1990, 135, expresses skepticism.

31. Horsfall 1990, 135.

quod genus hoc hominum? quaeue hunc tam barbara morem  
 permittit patria? hospitio prohibemur harenae;  
 bella cient primaque uentant consistere terra.  
 —(I.539–41)

What race of men is this? What land is so barbarous as to allow this custom? We are debarred the welcome of the beach; they stir up wars and forbid us to set foot on the border of their land.

It may be that, as Dido replies, the Carthaginians must police their borders carefully owing to threats from neighboring communities (I.563–64), but the failure to offer *hospitium* nevertheless shows the Carthaginians' strong disinclination toward undertaking reciprocal relations. Even the influence of Jupiter does not secure for the Trojans the sort of general welcome that Ilioneus expects would be offered anyone. This lack of *hospitium* is part of a general pattern of foreshadowing the historical opposition between Rome and Carthage.<sup>32</sup> But Vergil's use of economic language suggests that from the poet's perspective it is not only because Rome and Carthage will war with one another in the future that we find premonitions of conflict here, but also because of the mercantile nature of the Carthaginian people, which will necessarily make them a *barbara patria* (in the words of Ilioneus). The failure of the personal *hospitium* relationship between Aeneas and Dido, considered in the previous chapter, thus results not only from the Trojan legacy of *hospitium* violation that Aeneas bears, but also from Dido's cultural background.

Beneath these failures of *hospitium* lies the *incontinentia* inherent in a mercantile disposition, which leads to an excessive and ultimately destructive desire for valuable commodities. This tendency accounts for the profusion of gift language in the Dido episode, which indicates a mistaken shift in focus from the relationship fostered by gifts to the value of the gifts themselves. Thus, when passion first strikes Dido, she longs equally for erotic consummation (in the form of Cupid playing Ascanius) and the gifts Aeneas brings:

praecipue infelix, pesti deuota futurae,  
 expleri mentem nequit ardescitque tuendo  
 Phoenissa, et pariter puero donisque mouetur.  
 —(I.712–14)

32. Horsfall 1990, 131–33.

Above all, the unhappy Phoenician, doomed to impending ruin, cannot satiate her soul, but takes fire as she gazes, thrilled alike by the boy and by the gifts.

Some scholars have found Dido's weakness for gifts baffling.<sup>33</sup> In retrospect, we might suspect that Dido suffers from something like the "feminine love for booty and spoils" (*femineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore*, 11.782) that dooms Camilla. But Vergil suggests ethnicity rather than gender as the cause of Dido's weakness. Here, for the second time, Dido is called "Phoenician," and her fellow Tyrians marvel in just the same way at the disguised Cupid and the gifts (*Tyrii . . . frequentes . . . mirantur dona Aeneae, mirantur Iulum*, 1.707–9). By habit or nature, Carthaginians overvalue precious objects to the point that they move the passions, a fault we never find in Aeneas.

Because Venus understands this weakness, she contrives to inflame Dido's attraction to Aeneas with gifts:

at Cytherea nouas artes, noua pectore versat  
consilia, ut faciem mutatus et ora Cupido  
pro dulci Ascanio ueniat, donisque furem  
incendat reginam, atque ossibus implicet ignem.  
—(1.657–60)

But the Cytherean revolves in her breast new wiles, new schemes; how Cupid, changed in face and form, may come in the stead of sweet Ascanius, and by his gifts kindle the queen to madness and send the flame into her very marrow.

Venus knows better than any the pathways of desire and how desire, once kindled, can be redirected, in this case from gifts fit to entice a Phoenician to her son Aeneas. This reasoning accounts for Venus's strategy of making the disguised Cupid bear the gifts, and for the centrality of the gifts in this scene.<sup>34</sup> These gifts are particularly ill-omened, including as they do possessions of Helen and Ilione (1. 650–56).<sup>35</sup> This provenance, along with

33. "On s'est étonné de l'influence que Virgile attribue aux cadeaux sur une âme aussi élevée, aussi généreuse que celle de Didon" (Cartault 1926, 170).

34. Including 1.679, where Venus mentions to Cupid that Ascanius is preparing to bring gifts, and 1.695, when he first brings them into Dido's palace.

35. As discussed in the previous chapter.

Dido's excessive desire for the gifts, overdetermines the ultimate failure of this reciprocal gesture.

A climate of luxury at Carthage represents another expression of Phoenician economic *incontinentia*. Gold, silver, and purple cover Dido's palace (1.637–42, 1.697–700); Fama bruit abroad that Aeneas and Dido are idling in *luxu* (4.193). Then there are the gifts Dido gives Aeneas:

atque illi stellatus iaspide fulua  
 ensis erat Tyrioque ardebat murice laena  
 demissa ex umeris, diues quae munera Dido  
 fecerat, et tenui telas discreuerat auro.  
 —(4.261–64)

And his sword was starred with yellow jasper, and a cloak hung from his shoulders ablaze with Tyrian purple, a gift that wealthy Dido had wrought, interweaving the web with thread of gold.

The reference to the Tyrian purple in Aeneas's cloak presents Carthaginian luxury as an enticement to Aeneas that threatens to deter him from his mission.<sup>36</sup> Noble Romans of Vergil's day were no strangers to such refinements, but Augustus consciously set an example of relative simplicity and moderation in his house, person, and entertainments,<sup>37</sup> one that Vergil echoes in the lifestyle and admonitions of Evander (8.362–65). In and of itself Carthaginian luxury might suggest only excessive consumption, but in the context of other evidence for the character of the Tyrian or Phoenician people, it appears as at best an attempt to convert mercantile gains into gifts for aristocratic reciprocal exchange.<sup>38</sup> From this perspective excessive Carthaginian luxury reveals an un-aristocratic inability to strike the right balance: just as Carthaginian gestures at *hospitium* are uneven, so too are their attempts to participate in a gift economy undone by an immoderate focus on the value of objects.

These Carthaginian tendencies contribute to the failure of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido, coming to a head in their dispute over whether or not they are indeed married. Aeneas insists punctiliously—many would say coldly and legalistically—that he never formally married

36. Mercury emphasizes the *otia* (4.271) Aeneas is enjoying in Carthage while his mission awaits (4.271–76). Cf. 4.194, 4.354–55, 4.432, and see Horsfall 1990, 135.

37. Suet. *Aug.* 72–73.

38. Much as Cicero suggests at *Off.* 1.151, discussed in the introduction.

Dido (*nec coniugis umquam/praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera ueni*, 4.338–39).<sup>39</sup> For good or ill, Aeneas is at least consistent with his scrupulous observance of form in reciprocal relationships: Vergil refers to him as *pius Aeneas* right after his interview with Dido (4.393). It is perhaps easier to sympathize with Dido's emotional plight, but for her part she was undone at the outset (*pesti deuota futurae*, 1.712) by desires that, although exacerbated by Venus and Cupid, were natural for a *Phoenissa*.

In addition to the contested marriage, Dido's other reciprocal bonds decay as her relationship with Aeneas deteriorates. Dido turns from ordinary sacrifices and offerings (1.447, 1.632, 1.736) to appeals to the orthodox gods to persuade Aeneas to stay (4.54–64) and to magical rites for the same purpose (4.453, 478–519), rites she herself does not seem to believe in.<sup>40</sup> In the midst of these travails, she speaks of her desperation to her sister Anna with a strange financial turn of phrase. Dido asks Anna to request that Aeneas delay his departure:

extremam hanc oro ueniam (miserere sororis)  
quam mihi cum dederit cumulatam morte remittam.  
—(4.435–36)

This last grace I crave—pity your sister—which, when he has granted it, I will repay with full interest in my death.

Williams translates “and when he has granted [this favor] to me, I will pay it back with interest when I die,” noting that *cumulatam* is a financial metaphor.<sup>41</sup> The proper interpretation of the second line has been a source of contention, in particular the question of whether Dido is referring to her own potential suicide.<sup>42</sup> But it is nonetheless clear that Dido uses a financial metaphor in the context of requesting a favor, showing again in a time of stress a Punic awkwardness in reciprocal relations. Furthermore, Dido neglects to give offerings to the shrine of her dead husband, Sychaeus, which she had cultivated assiduously prior to Aeneas's arrival (4.458), and declares that she can no longer rely on any *gratia* (4.539) for managing re-

39. Gibson 1999.

40. Horsfall 1990, 136.

41. Williams 1972a ad 4.436.

42. See Austin 1973 ad 4.436, where he gives an account of the problems that led Conington to state that the line was “well known as the most difficult in Virgil.” It is also possible that *ueniam* refers not to Dido's request to Aeneas, as Goold takes it in his translation, but to her request to Anna to convey her message. See Murgia 1987, 55–56.

relationships with neighboring cities, having lost it through her relationship with Aeneas. Dido fails to maintain reciprocal ties either within her household or outside it.

A set of more significant gifts between Dido and Aeneas mirrors and heightens this larger progressive decline in reciprocity. Only four gifts in the Dido episode are referred to as *munera*, rather than *dona*, all of which are given between Dido and Aeneas. The word *munus* has a greater inherent sense of service or obligation and so signals a particularly close relationship between Aeneas and Dido.<sup>43</sup> One of these gifts is the sword and cloak Dido gives Aeneas (4.263); another is the favor of a delay in departing that Dido requests from Aeneas (4.429); the third is part of Dido's curse on the Trojans, that future Carthaginians attack them as funeral offerings (*munera*, 4.624) to her;<sup>44</sup> the last is a reference to the sword Aeneas had given her as a gift, which she uses to kill herself (4.647). The word *munus* thus tracks the decay in Dido's relationship with Aeneas through the change in its significance, from a gesture of affection, to a great favor, to a curse, and finally to death. Thus the gifts associated with Dido remain ill omened (9.266, 11.73–75) not just on account of her own tragic fate, but also through their connection with failed reciprocity at Carthage.

Dido's failures at reciprocity come with a heavy irony. Vergil often clusters the words *Sidonia*, *Dido*, and *dona*,<sup>45</sup> creating through repetition of the second syllable of the queen's name an encapsulation of her difficulties as a Phoenician (*Sidonia*) in managing reciprocal relations (*dona*). Dido's name is associated with the very word for gifts only to emphasize her inability to handle them properly. A similar paradox lies in Dido's exclamation to Aeneas that "nowhere is faith secure" (*nusquam tuta fides*, 4.373). Aeneas's own *fides* is questionable: Dido can claim with some justification that he is bound by more than political alliance or friendship, though he denies it. Yet Dido's lament for *fides* cannot but sound false to Romans, for whom Carthaginian perfidy was axiomatic.<sup>46</sup> As these ironies suggest, Dido's failures in reciprocity are errors of omission, determined largely by her ethnic identity and counterbalanced by an otherwise noble

43. Servius ad 2.269 observes: *quidam donum ex uoluntate dicunt uenire, munus ex officio*. Evander's "promised service" (*promissi muneris*) to Aeneas at 8.464 shows the word being used for a gift of obligatory service.

44. This use suggests the common meaning of *munera* as gladiatorial games offered to the dead.

45. Paschalis 1989, 6–7, 48–49. One example is at 1.446–47: *hic templum Iunoni ingens Sidonia Dido/condebat, donis opulentum et numine diuae*.

46. Horsfall 1990, 134.

nature that Vergil indicates by eschewing in her character the worst Roman stereotypes of the Carthaginians.<sup>47</sup>

In this way Dido may be said to share in the nature of her tutelary goddess Juno, though only to a limited extent. This difference appears most clearly when Juno plots to use Dido as a bargaining chip. Juno proposes to Venus that Dido be given to Aeneas so that both goddesses can rule over their joined nations at Carthage (4.102–4). As part of her proposal, Juno promises that Venus will have the Carthaginian people as Dido's dowry (*dotalisque tuae Tyrios permittere dextrae*, 4.104). Though superficially concerned with Dido's welfare, Juno in fact uses her as part of a bargain to defeat Aeneas, just as she drains any goodwill from the gesture of granting a dowry by using it as a token in trade with Venus. As the victim of this strategy, Dido's position has parallels with that of Aeneas and the Trojans at the fall of Troy: they are overcome by the deceptive gift giver Sinon, and Dido and her city are laid low by the gifts Cupid brings.<sup>48</sup> Both are also guilty of venial failures of *hospitium*: Aeneas by condoning (as far as we know) the abduction of Helen, and Dido through the refusal of *hospitium* of which Ilioneus complains. Fundamentally, however, Aeneas does not show the excessive desire for goods that Dido does, and it is this difference, along with Juno's patronage, that makes the failures of reciprocity at Carthage all but inevitable. Juno and Venus inflame Dido's existing desires such that she races for a relationship beyond *hospitium* and alliance too quickly for her own good, giving rise to an inveterate hatred for Aeneas and his people. Thus the mercantile nature of Dido and her Carthaginians contributes to the picture of the Punic city as the anti-type of Rome.

### Nisus and Euryalus

Two lesser characters, though in other respects very different from Dido, resemble her in having a partially mercantile and acquisitive nature that brings them to misfortune. Whereas with Dido Vergil uses this pattern of behavior to foreshadow the historical rivalry between Rome and Carthage, with the Trojan warriors Nisus and Euryalus he uses it to distinguish the socioeconomic norms of his epic from the traditional heroic economy of Homer. In Book 9, Nisus and Euryalus undertake a mission to recall Aeneas from Evander to help the besieged Trojans. Euryalus lingers so long over the slaughter and the spoils of the enemy that he and Nisus

47. Starks 1999 and Isaac 2004, 339.

48. Frangoulidis 1992.

are caught and killed before they can reach Aeneas. Scholars have to varying degrees seen the failure and deaths of Nisus and Euryalus as the result of their inability to constrain their desires for goods and for slaughter.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Nisus himself thinks that Euryalus is carried away by too great an appetite for bloodshed (*sensit enim nimia caede atque cupidine ferri*, 9.324).

Yet their *incontinentia* is also stamped with the marks of mercantile behavior, not least because Vergil takes the mission of Dolon in *Iliad* 10 as the major Iliadic model for this episode. Like both Nisus and Euryalus, Dolon was a Trojan who undertook a night mission behind enemy lines and was caught and killed.<sup>50</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the character of Dolon in both the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* closely approaches the type of the merchant. It is remarkable, therefore, that Vergil's Trojan pair manages to express greater desire for material acquisition than Dolon himself. In the Homeric Doloneia, both the Achaean senior councilor Nestor and the Trojan leader Hector, unbeknownst to each other, propose separate missions on the same night, and each speaks first of material rewards (10.213, 10.303–4). Those who will carry out the mission on the Achaean side, Diomedes and Odysseus, make no mention of booty before setting out. The Trojan Dolon, by contrast, agrees to undertake the mission only if Hector promises him the horses of Achilles (10.321–27). In Vergil's episode, Nisus speaks first about the material rewards of the raid he will carry out, to which the senior Trojan warrior Aletes responds with an offer of gifts (9.252–56). Furthermore, like Dolon, Nisus and Euryalus neglect customary reciprocal relations with the gods by failing to sacrifice to them before setting out on the mission.<sup>51</sup>

If Nisus's eagerness for rewards makes him appear more acquisitive than Dolon, Euryalus sounds another false note when he declares his commitment to the expedition:

est hic, est animus lucis contemptor et istum  
qui uita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem.  
—(9.205–6)

49. Quinn 1968, 201, is more critical of both heroes, while Thornton 1976, 166–71, and Lennox 1977, 336–41, see Nisus as responsible and admirable.

50. For some of the facts regarding the parallel with Dolon, I draw on Casali 2005, 12, 17–18, who provides a useful survey of interpretations of the episode. For other Homeric models, see Hardie 1994, 29–31.

51. Casali 2005, 17–18. Though Nisus does pray to Diana, too late, for help in aiming his spear, in the commodity *do ut des* form: 9.404–9.



Mine is a heart that scorns the light, and believes that the glory that you strive for is cheaply bought with life.

The idea of “buying” honor, even with one’s life, fits oddly with a warrior of heroic epic, particularly when extended into the common idiom “to buy cheaply” (*bene emere*). The overt commodity sense of this phrase is reflected in the otherwise dead metaphor of “paying a penalty,” used later in connection with Euryalus’s death. As the Rutulian captain Volcens prepares to kill Euryalus in retaliation for the deaths of his own men by the unseen Nisus, he says that Euryalus will “pay him the penalty for both with [his] warm blood” (*calido mihi sanguine poenas/persolues ambo-rum*, 9.422–23). Hardie notes that the word *persolues* represents “in origin a financial image” and compares it to Euryalus’s earlier use of the phrase *bene emere*.<sup>52</sup> Euryalus thus receives the glory which he was willing to pay his life for, as the narrator promises (9.446–49),<sup>53</sup> but he also damns his mission, Nisus, and the lives of the Trojans who might have been saved by Aeneas’s speedier return; in this sense he actually pays (Volcens’s *persolues*) more than he bargained for.

There is thus a tension in the figures of Nisus and Euryalus between a mercantile desire for acquisition and more traditional heroism. Vergil highlights this tension with an inset description of the booty Euryalus takes from one of his victims:

Euryalus phaleras Rhamnetis et aurea bullis  
cingula, Tiburti Remulo ditissimus olim  
quae mittit dona, hospitio cum iungeret absens,  
Caedicus; ille suo moriens dat habere nepoti;  
post mortem bello Rutuli pugnaque potiti:  
haec rapit atque umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat.  
—(9.359–64)

Euryalus takes the trappings of Rhamnes and his gold-studded sword belt, gifts that long ago wealthy Caedicus sent to Remulus of Tibur, when plighting friendship far away; he when dying gave them to his grandson for his own; after his death the Rutulians captured them in

52. Hardie 1994 ad 9.423.

53. How exactly we assess the posthumous fame of the pair is bound up with the contentious question of how we are to consider them *fortunati* (9.446). They may be fortunate as lovers, as Williams 1983, 206, and Lyne 1987, 235–36, contend, or as proven patriots, as Otis 1963, 389, asserts.

war and battle. These he tears away, and fits upon his valiant breast—  
all in vain.

The description of the provenance of the war gear feels particularly Homeric, recalling items such as the boar's-tusk helmet worn by Odysseus (*Il.* 10.266–70) and the scepter of Agamemnon (*Il.* 2.101–8),<sup>54</sup> and thus evokes the fully functioning model of Homeric heroic exchange in which such objects play a central role. More specifically, the notice that the Rutulians stripped these objects as spoils recalls the commodity side of Homeric exchange practice, according to which such precious goods are highly esteemed and avidly pursued. Conversely, Caedicus gave these objects as gifts (*dona*) in order to form a *hospitium* relationship with Remulus of Tibur, a fact that alludes to their role in reciprocal practice.

By invoking the Homeric economy but relegating it to a heroic past prior to the *Aeneid*, Vergil illustrates the divided nature of his characters Nisus and Euryalus. They both express a love of glory (Nisus: *mihi facti/fama sat est*, 9.194–95; Euryalus: *magno laudum percussus amore*, 9.197), but their contrasting desire for goods, expressed in mercantile terms, leaves them somewhere between full Homeric heroism and the greed of their counterpart, Dolon. In the end, the actions and fates of Nisus and Euryalus convey a skepticism of social structures, such as the Homeric heroic gift economy, that balance appetitive commodity and reciprocal behaviors. In the *Aeneid*, as in Roman ideology, engagement in commodity exchange tends to corrupt reciprocity quickly and disastrously.

## Turnus

Like Nisus and Euryalus, Aeneas's antagonist Turnus seems to live partly in the epic world of Homer. Scholars have expressed a wide range of opinion on Turnus's character,<sup>55</sup> but even those who find him reprehensible generally admit a certain virtue in his apparent adherence to Homeric heroic norms. Turnus shows a defiant individualism reminiscent of Achilles, a trait potentially ennobling but also fatal in a world dominated by the Roman communal values represented by Aeneas.<sup>56</sup> To be sure, we cannot posit an absolute distinction between Turnus as representative of Homeric

54. This observation and examples are from Hardie 1994 ad 9.360–63, who notes that the "additive" manner of composition is distinctly Homeric.

55. Schenk 1984, 7–18, gives a survey of approaches. Other references can be found at Horsfall 2000a, 209–10.

56. Otis 1963 and Schenk 1984; see further references at Traina 1984b, 324.

individualism and Aeneas of Roman communality, not least because a similar tension between individualism and the community already exists in the *Iliad*.<sup>57</sup> Yet when the Sybil suggests that Aeneas will find in Turnus "another Achilles" (*alius Achilles*, 6.89), she means not simply that Turnus will oppose Aeneas, but that he also has something of the pride and fierce independence of the Greek champion.<sup>58</sup>

Just as Achilles jealously guards his glory (*timē*), Turnus exercises his military *uirtus* to bring himself *gloria*. His ultimate destruction in part replays the fates of Nisus and Euryalus: the pursuit of *gloria* brings disaster because in the *Aeneid* it invariably becomes a corrupting desire for commodity objects.<sup>59</sup> Turnus's strong ties to Juno (7.438–39) suggest that he, like Dido, may share in Juno's mercantile perspective.<sup>60</sup> But Vergil adds a distinctive self-reflexive dimension to Turnus's economic constitution: although his heroic behavior shades into the mercantile, Turnus conceives of himself as acting with aristocratic reciprocity. This mistaken self-awareness adds to our sense of Turnus's dislocation: he can neither act in fully Homeric vein, because this economic system does not function in the world of the *Aeneid*, nor can he make his reciprocal practices seem more than a hollow ploy.

To see how this is so, we must begin by taking stock of Turnus's reciprocal actions.<sup>61</sup> Turnus maintains one explicit tie of *hospitium*, with

57. Hardie 1994, 19 n. 29. For appreciations of the noble and tragic aspects of Turnus, see Pöschl 1962, 92–138; Otis 1966, 62; Putnam 1966, 151–201; Camps 1969, 38–40; Johnson 1976, 118–19; Galinsky 1981, 1001; and Traina 1984b, 324–25.

58. Scholars have read the Sybil's phrase as indicating either Turnus (e.g., Perotti 1991; Turnus boasts as much himself at 9.742) or Aeneas (e.g., van Nortwick 1980 and Boyle 1986, 155–56). Some in the former camp have drawn attention to the fact that the Sybil predicts *alius* ("another kind of") rather than *alter* ("a second") *Achilles*, arguing that this more appropriately refers to Turnus as a different kind of Achilles who will be conquered, rather than Aeneas (see Traina 1984b, 327).

59. Mention of *gloria* in the stories of Entellus, Euryalus, and Pallas is at 5.394, 9.278, 11.154. Turnus speaks of his own *uirtus* and *gloria* at 11.440–44. See Earl 1967, 66–68, and Habinek 2000, 268.

60. Traina 1984b, 325, notes the genealogical connection between Turnus and Juno. Cf. Turnus's *nec regia Iuno/immemor est nostri*, 7.438–39.

61. Two issues that I will not deal with at length are Turnus's relationship with Lavinia and his involvement with the broken peace treaty Latinus establishes with Aeneas at 12.212. Marriage can be viewed in various ways as a reciprocal relationship, both between the conjugal pair and between families, clans, and communities, but whatever Amata may hope for, Turnus is never formally anything more than a suitor (7.55–56). On a larger scale, as suggested earlier, the failure to make a wedding between Aeneas and Lavinia a concordant reciprocal tie is part of the complex of such failures originating in the Trojan *hospitium* violation and the mercantile nature of Juno. The peace treaty of Book 12 is agreed upon by Latinus rather than

Mezentius (Evander calls Turnus the *hospes* of Mezentius, 8.493), but his choice of guest-friend makes this a rather odd relationship. As a "scorner of the gods," (*contemptor diuum*, 7.648, 8.7),<sup>62</sup> Mezentius spurns the exchange of benefactions with divinities. He does give spoils as a reward to his son (10.701) but otherwise seems to have contempt for the idea of gift giving. He refers to the spears that he hurls at Aeneas as "gifts" (*dona*, 10.882); his irony seems to mock Aeneas's preference for using gifts rather than weapons to obtain political goals. Mezentius himself was of course no master of political relationships, for he scarcely escaped death at the hands of his own subjects. It would seem, then, that Turnus takes as his one guest-friend the character in the poem who is by nature most antithetical to the practice of reciprocal relationships. We are left to wonder whether Evander calls Turnus the *hospes* of Mezentius because he is projecting his own values upon a relationship that is in fact an alliance of convenience. In any case, a guest-friendship with Mezentius, who disdains reciprocal relationships, would seem unworthy of the name.

Unlike Mezentius, Turnus does maintain relationships with the gods. In Juno's effort to win support for him, she reminds Jupiter that Turnus has always left "many gifts" with "a generous hand" at Jupiter's temples (*larga/. . . manu . . . multis . . . donis*, 10.619–20). Nevertheless, comparison of Turnus's behavior with Aeneas shows that he falls short of the fullest level of reciprocal interaction with the gods. As discussed in the previous chapter, in Roman culture mortal interactions with the gods are framed in reciprocal terms, with both sides generating goodwill through the giving of gifts, but the actual transactions take a commodity form: mortals give or pledge sacrifices in return for specific divine assistance. It is therefore notable that Aeneas, though dedicated to the gods throughout the poem, does not adopt the language of commodity exchange for his interactions with the divine. This remains true even at moments of crisis such as the fall of Troy, when we might expect him in desperation to remind the gods of his past services or to pledge some great sacrifice in return for their aid. At the opening of Book 11, we see Aeneas fulfilling his vows after his vic-

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Turnus himself, though this does not mean that Turnus might not share responsibility for violating it (Horsfall 2000a, 203). In and of itself, the contractual pact has a commodity, rather than reciprocal form, but Aeneas does inject his reflexive hopes for a reciprocal relationship into it by describing the mutual duties of Trojans and Latins he envisions should he be victorious (12.192–94).

62. See Harrison 1997 ad 10.743–44, who writes that "Mezentius is not a skeptical atheist, but a proud man who defies and disobeys the gods."

tory (11.2–4), but just as we do not see him stripping the spoils of Mezentius, we never hear Aeneas make those vows.<sup>63</sup>

The one exception to Aeneas's behavior proves the rule. When Aeneas comes before the Sybil to ask for the guidance of Apollo, he recalls Phoebus's good services to the Trojans in the war and asks the god to favor their attempt to settle in Italy. He also tells the Sybil that he will establish a temple for Phoebus and Trivia, a festival for Phoebus, and a shrine for the Sybil's own pronouncements (6.69–74). But Vergil reveals how unnatural this sort of bargaining with the gods is for Aeneas when he must be scolded into performing it by the Sybil, who twice admonishes him for his delay: "*cessas in uota precesque, / Tros,*" *ait*, "*Aenea? cessas?*" (6.51–52). Aeneas no doubt hesitates because of his astonishment at the change in the Sybil when she is possessed by Apollo: his Trojan comrades show their fear by shivering (6.54–55). But we must also consider this hesitation in light of the fact that nowhere else in the poem does he make such a prayer. When the Sybil herself compels Aeneas to make vows (*uota*), he shows due reverence and obeys, but he is not accustomed to interacting with the gods in this way.

Aeneas thus provides an elevated standard of abstention from commodity-type interactions with the gods, a standard from which other characters depart. Iarbas invokes his past sacrifices to Jupiter in calling upon him to disrupt the relationship of Aeneas and Dido (4.215–18). Nisus recalls his past service to Diana when he requests that she help him aim his spear (9.404–9). And, finally, Turnus himself reminds the god Faunus of his past services as he prays that the god hold Aeneas's spear fast in a stump where it has lodged (12.777–79). All three of these characters show a tendency toward taking a commodity view of dealing with others: Nisus as we have seen above, Turnus as we are now considering, and Iarbas in his sale of land to Dido. In comparison to Aeneas, this particular kind of prayer distinguishes Turnus as less committed to relying on reciprocal goodwill and closer to the mercantile end of the socioeconomic spectrum, dominated by his patroness, Juno: Turnus recognizes the divine will only when it coincides with his own desires.<sup>64</sup>

Vergil reinforces this impression through an implicit comparison of Turnus with Pallas, the son of Evander whom Turnus kills in a duel. Before confronting Turnus, Pallas calls upon Hercules for aid:

63. Horsfall 2003 ad 11.2–4.

64. "Il che non vuol dire che non esista una *pietas* di Turnus, ma più culturale che autenticamente religiosa, in quanto non riconosce la volontà divina se non quando coincide con i propri desideri" (Traina 1984b, 326). Indeed, only Juno refers explicitly to the *pietas* of Turnus (10.617).

per patris hospitium et mensas, quas aduena adisti,  
 te precor, Alcide, coeptis ingentibus adsis.  
 cernat semineci sibi me rapere arma cruenta  
 uictoremque ferant morientia lumina Turni.  
 —(10.460–63)

By my father's welcome, and the table to which you came as a stranger,  
 I beseech you, Alcides, aid my great enterprise. May Turnus see me  
 strip the bloody arms from his limbs, and may his dying eyes endure a  
 conqueror!

Pallas's entreaty is pitiful because it will not save him: Hercules can only respond with tears.<sup>65</sup> The prayer also serves to contrast Pallas with the opponent whom he is about to face. Pallas invokes past services when facing single combat against an overwhelming enemy, just as Turnus prays to Faunus for help against Aeneas. But Pallas's prayer differs significantly in its emphasis on the reciprocal relationship that his father, and by extension he himself, had with Hercules, who was shown the generosity due a stranger (*advena*)<sup>66</sup> and consequently formed a guest-friend relationship (*hospitium*) with Evander. Pallas invokes an ongoing reciprocal relationship as much as a specific act of hospitality. Turnus not only does not call on such relationships himself, but specifically mocks them in his triumph at Pallas's death.

Turnus's behavior toward the divinities is consistent with his treatment of the ordinary objects of heroic exchange, namely spoils taken in battle. Critical attention has focused here on the propriety of Turnus's keeping spoils, particularly the baldric of Pallas, rather than dedicating them as Aeneas does in every case. Those who do not find anything to fault in Turnus's keeping of spoils can cite Homeric precedents, while others point to the typical Roman practice, which calls for dedicating spoils to a god.<sup>67</sup> Yet Aeneas and Turnus differ not only in how they dedicate the arms of their opponents, but also in how they acquire them. Although Aeneas has one of his associates strip gear from a slain enemy (10.541–42) and

65. A reference to the model scene at *Iliad* 16.431–61, in which Hera tells Zeus that he cannot change what is fated by saving Sarpedon.

66. Sahlins 1968, 140, would class this as a type of generalized reciprocity, involving altruistic giving with an emphasis on social solidarity, no pressure for return, and no stipulation of time or reckoning of equivalent value.

67. See Horsfall 2000a, 166–67, 205, who himself favors the interpretation that the keeping of spoils is not consonant with Roman norms.

mounts the arms of Mezentius as a trophy (11.5–8), we never witness Aeneas himself stripping spoils. By contrast, in a vivid scene Turnus plants his foot on the chest of Pallas, tears off his baldric (10.495–97), and exults (*quo nunc Turnus ouat spolio gaudetque potitus*, 10.500). Vergil's narrator then observes that the minds of men are blind and do not know how to accept their successes with moderation (*nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae/et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis*, 10.500–501). At 12.92–100, we learn that Turnus took his spear from the Auruncian Actor, and Servius identifies the Aurunci with the Ausonians living close to Campania.<sup>68</sup> Turnus is thus carrying the spoils taken from one of his Ausonian allies,<sup>69</sup> which suggests that he may have killed the man. Turnus alone decapitates his enemies and ties their heads to his chariot rail (12.511–12).

Turnus's behavior contrasts with that of Aeneas in a parallel scene. When the young warrior Lausus comes to the aid of his wounded father Mezentius, Aeneas kills him, but the dying Lausus calls to Aeneas's mind his own relationship with Anchises (*patriae . . . pietatis imago*, 10.824). Aeneas pities the dead Lausus and tells him to keep the arms in which he delighted (*arma, quibus laetatus, habe tua*, 10.827). When, according to Homeric norms, we would expect Aeneas to strip the arms of his opponent, he is instead inspired by *pietas* to relinquish them as a gift. Here and elsewhere, because we do not witness Aeneas taking arms from defeated opponents, he seems to participate in only half of the traditional heroic economy: he gives gifts to foster reciprocal relationships, but these gifts appear as if from nowhere. Aeneas thus seems to dwell on an elevated plane of reciprocal interactions. Turnus, by contrast, not only takes spoils, but does so with an immoderate desire for acquisition, acting out the worst interpretation of the commodity side of the heroic economy.

Vergil freights the whole passage where Turnus takes Pallas's baldric with a complex of economic language that reflects Turnus's mercantile tendencies and self-delusion:

"Arcades, haec" inquit "memores mea dicta referte  
 Euandro: qualem meruit, Pallanta remitto.  
 quisquis honos tumuli, quidquid solamen humandi est,  
 largior. haud illi stabunt Aeneia paruo  
 hospitia." et laeuo pressit pede talia fatus

68. Ad 7.727.

69. Maguinness 1992 ad 12.94.

exanimem rapiens immania pondera baltei  
 impressumque nefas: una sub nocte iugali  
 caesa manus iuuenum foede thalamique cruenti,  
 quae Clonus Eurytides multo caelauerat auro;  
 quo nunc Turnus ouat spolio gaudetque potitus.  
 nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae  
 et seruare modum rebus sublata secundis!  
 Turno tempus erit, magno cum optauerit emptum  
 intactum Pallanta et cum spolia ista diemque  
 oderit.  
 —(10.491–505)

"Arcadians, give heed, and bear these words of mine back to Evander: I send him back Pallas as he has deserved to receive him. Whatever honor a tomb gives, whatever solace a burial, I freely grant; but his welcome of Aeneas shall cost him dear." So saying, with his left foot he trod upon the dead man, tearing away the belt's huge weight and the story of the crime engraved on it—the youthful band foully slain on one nuptial night, and the chambers drenched with blood—which Clonus, son of Eurytus, had richly chased in gold. Now Turnus exults in the spoil, and glories in the winning. O mind of man, knowing not fate or coming doom or how to keep bounds when uplifted with favoring fortune! To Turnus shall come the hour when for a great price he will long to have bought an unscathed Pallas, and when he will abhor those spoils and that day.

The words *meruit*, *remitto*, and *stabunt paruo* in Turnus's speech, taken together with the word *emptum* in the narrator's closing remarks, all have strong connotations of commodity exchange. Turnus commands his comrades to tell Evander that he is "sending back" (*remitto*) Pallas as he "deserved" (*meruit*) to be. In addition to meaning simply "send back," *remitto* also has the specialized meaning of "forgiving a debt."<sup>70</sup> The word *mereo*

70. OLD s.v. *remitto* 13. Aeneas later uses the word *remitto* for his return of the body of Lausus to his kinsmen (10.828), but unlike in Turnus's statement there are no other financial terms there that evoke a financial meaning. Harrison 1997 ad 491–500 points out a number of parallels between the speeches of Aeneas and Turnus over the youthful opponents they have slain. He calls the difference between Turnus's arrogant rhetoric and Aeneas's humanity in their respective treatments of the dead Pallas and Lausus "the greatest point of contrast between the two commanders," one that is "essential to their characterization." Turnus's commodity language contributes to the contrast with Aeneas's treatment of Lausus.



can express the commodity notion of “earning” (e.g., *meretrix*), but often means simply “to deserve.” But these words are both followed by Turnus’s declaration that the guest-friendship (*hospitia*) Evander offered to Aeneas would “cost him not a little” (*haud stabunt paruo*).<sup>71</sup> Balanced by these expressions is Turnus’s show of reciprocal generosity when he tells Evander that he “generously grants” (*largior*) the “honor” (*honos*) of Pallas’s burial.

Turnus presents himself as a generous man, giving freely even to his enemies, much as the historical Caesar cultivated a liberal reputation by pardoning his defeated adversaries.<sup>72</sup> But the rest of Turnus’s remarks denigrate reciprocal practices in commodity terms that belie his own self-presentation. His gesture of returning Pallas’s body as a gift—Turnus’s sole reciprocal act toward mortals in the poem—contains a modicum of true generosity, but it is at best a bitter favor to offer a father the dead body of his son as a gift; Turnus’s dark irony seems intentional.<sup>73</sup> He also derides the guest-friendship (*hospitia*) between Aeneas and Evander in pointedly commodity terms, and his killing of Pallas seems to negate the *hospitium et mensas* that Pallas invoked in calling upon Hercules for aid (10.460). Indeed, the very baldric that Turnus strips from Pallas contains an image of the brutal violation of *hospitium*—the daughters of Danaus killing the sons of Aegyptus, whom they are hosting—which the narrator calls “unspeakable” (*nefas*, 10.497).<sup>74</sup> In stripping Pallas’s baldric, then, Turnus provides an emblematic demonstration of his hostility to reciprocal ties twice over: he appropriates an image of reciprocal ties ruptured by violence by violently seizing an object ordinarily used as a gift to establish such ties.<sup>75</sup> As this act suggests, Turnus’s hostility to *hospitium* is not restricted to his derision of the alliance between Aeneas and Evander. Instead, his use of commodity terms in this passage, along with his abstention from reciprocity elsewhere in the poem, shows that Turnus thinks much as Juno does and is thus instinctively antagonistic to the Roman ideal, champi-

71. Harrison 1997 ad 10.494–95 says of *haud illi stabunt Aeneia paruo/hospitia*: “*stabunt*, ‘cost’, followed by ablative of price, continues the commercial metaphor of *meruit* and *largior* (above), while *haud paruo* is a taunting litotes—Turnus is well aware what Pallas’s death means to Evander.”

72. In a letter to Cicero during the civil war, Caesar lays out his strategy: *haec noua sit ratio uincendi ut misericordia et liberalitate nos muniamus*. Cic. Att. 9.7.C.1.

73. Harrison 1997 ad 10.493–94: “*largior*: this verb, like English ‘largess,’ indicates large-scale giving (TLL vii/2. 968. 46ff.), and is a cruel addition to the commercial metaphor of *meruit* and *stabunt*: Pallas’s death costs Evander dear, but the boy’s body is a free gift.”

74. For this interpretation and further discussion see Harrison 1998, 228–29.

75. Note that Turnus is the only character in the poem described as *uiolentus*: 10.151, 11.354, 11.376, 12.9, 12.45.

oned by Aeneas, of handling affairs through reciprocity. Yet just as Turnus elsewhere indulges in self-deception,<sup>76</sup> here he presents himself as generous and through pride and guilelessness believes his own illusion.

The narrator confirms the underlying nature of Turnus with a comment at the close of the passage, saying that he will one day "wish to have bought an unscathed Pallas" (*optauerit emptum/intactum Pallanta*) and "abhor those spoils and the day" on which he took them (*spolia ista diemque/oderit*).<sup>77</sup> The prediction looks forward to the baldric of Pallas as the proximate cause of Turnus's death: the sight of it prompts Aeneas to overcome his hesitation and kill Turnus (12.941–43). The narrator uses the commercial word *emptum* to suggest that Turnus will respond to reversals caused by his excess desire for goods (*nescia mens . . . / . . . seruare modum*), in his mind at least, by wishing to buy his way out of it rather than fall back on the reciprocal bonds he spurns.

As Turnus gets further from this moment of triumph over Pallas and the war turns against the Latins, his posture of generosity disappears, while he is taken to task for dealing with others as commodities by his harshest and most perceptive critic, Drances. This criticism comes in the context of a meeting of the Latin leaders to deliberate on their deteriorating situation. Following a vivid description of the slain Latin masses and the mixed reactions toward Turnus that these deaths provoked (11.203–24), the council opens with the Latin ambassadors reporting Diomedes' refusal to provide military assistance, saying that he turned away their gifts, gold, and entreaties (*nil dona neque aurum/nec magnas ualuisse preces*, 11.228–29). The ambassadors further relate that Diomedes strongly urged peace (11.292–93) and enjoined the Latins to give Aeneas the gifts they have offered him: *munera quae patriis ad me portatis ab oris/uertite ad Aenean* (11.281–82).<sup>78</sup> Diomedes has learned from his own suffering to

76. E.g., when Turnus says he does not need the arms of Vulcan to defeat the Trojans (9.148), but does in fact have a sword made by Vulcan (12.90–91), a discrepancy noted by Servius and Hardie 1994 ad 9.148.

77. Harrison 1997 ad 10.503–4: "*magno . . . emptum*: the commercial metaphor suggests the ransomings of the Homeric world (*Il.* 21.42ff) and picks up *meruit* (492) and (especially) *haud illi stabunt . . . paruo* (494): Turnus' future fate is characterized by the language of his own vicious taunts."

78. There is some discrepancy between this simple recommendation to seek peace, which the ambassadors report to the council, and their initial statement to the people before they come to the king's chamber. The latter suggests that Diomedes advised the Latins that they might do equally well either by seeking other allies to strengthen their war effort or by treating for peace with Aeneas (*alia arma Latinis/quaerenda, aut pacem Troiano ab rege petendum*, 11.229–30). The messengers are speaking advisedly in different terms to different audiences. In addressing the people, they know that there are two factions among the Latins, one that

shun war and will not take gold in what would amount to payment for his military services. Rather than using their gifts to prolong strife, he urges the Latins to take advantage of the outstanding *pietas* of Aeneas (*hic pietate prior*, 11.292) that disposes him toward reciprocal relationships and seek immediate allegiance and reconciliation.

Diomedes' advocacy of the formation of reciprocal ties sets a standard from which the figures of Turnus and Drances deviate in their subsequent exchange, Turnus in the direction of the merchant and Drances toward the prodigal. Drances accuses Turnus of considering the lives of the Latins "cheap" resources that he can use to gain the hand of Lavinia. He ironically urges continued fighting:

scilicet ut Turno contingat regia coniunx,  
nos animae uiles, inhumata infletaque turba,  
sternamur campis.  
—(11.371–73)

Oh yes, to be sure, so that Turnus can gain his royal bride, let us, whose lives are cheap, be strewn over the fields, a mob unburied and unwept.

We know that there is substance to Drances' charges, not only because, despite his bias (*infensus iuueni Turno*, 11.123, *inuidia*, 11.337), Drances can speak truly about Turnus,<sup>79</sup> but also because of the evidence we have seen to this point of Turnus's mercantile mentality. Drances reveals the generosity of which Turnus earlier made a show to be at bottom only a willingness to spend the lives of others.

For his part, Turnus touches a nerve when he dismisses Drances as "liberal" in speaking (*larga . . . copia fandi*, 11.378). Drances had indeed praised Aeneas fulsomely when leading a contingent to request a burial truce (11.124–31) and is also discredibly "liberal" with his wealth (*largus opum*, 11.338), using it to sow strife rather than concord (*seditione potens*, 11.340, cf. 11.220). In both his speech and his finances, Drances has the

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wished for a quick peace achieved by duel and one that supported Turnus and continuing war (11.215–24). Taking account of these volatile tensions (*flagrante tumultu*) they give a neutrally balanced report to the people to keep from provoking further strife, then convey Diomedes' true words to the council for its deliberations.

79. Quinn 1968, 242; Traina 1984b, 330–31; and Hardie 1998, 245, 261. Drances is modeled in part on Homer's Polydamas, an unheroic Trojan rival of Hector who also provides good advice that goes unheeded (*Il.* 12.108–15, 12.210–50, 18.243–304).

profile of a prodigal whose immoderate expenditures contribute to social strife. Turnus alludes to this trait just as Drances alludes to Turnus's mercantile nature, all as part of their contest for dominance. Both Drances in his reckless liberality and Turnus with his calculated use of others' lives are overshadowed by Diomedes, with his exhortation to use gifts for peace.

Turnus concludes his council speech by claiming that he will not allow Drances either to gain martial glory or to "pay" with his death if the gods should require such a sacrifice to defeat Aeneas:

nec Drances potius, siue est haec ira deorum,  
morte luat, siue est uirtus et gloria, tollat.  
—(11.443–44)

It is not Drances rather than I who pays the gods with his death, if they are angry, or wins glory for his courage, if that is the prize here.

Turnus is disparaging Drances for his cowardice (*frigida bello/dextera*, 11.338–39), but also stating the two outcomes he himself is prepared to accept: glory, or the payment of his own life to the gods. The phrase *morte luere* appears once elsewhere in the poem at the beginning of a line. Later in Book 11, Diana's minion Opis sets the terms for what will happen to the man who kills Camilla (*nam quicumque tuum uiolauit uulnere corpus/morte luet merita*, 11.848–49). These terms are fulfilled in the death of Arruns, who tries to keep himself free from any obligations of exchange by refusing to take any spoils from Camilla, not realizing that he would have to pay simply for the glory of slaying her. By contrast, Turnus embraces the idea of exchanging his life. This gesture simultaneously demonstrates his courage and hints again at his mercantile disposition, since by implication he proves Drances right: he believes his own life has a great value, enough to appease the gods, but not so the lives of the other Latins who must die for his cause.

Turnus persists in viewing his circumstances in commodity terms even when he is offered a last chance to change course. At the opening of Book 12, Turnus declares to Latinus his intention to meet Aeneas in single combat. Latinus hesitates, telling Turnus that his very ardor makes it necessary to consider the situation all the more deliberately:

o praestans animi iuuenis, quantum ipse feroci  
uirtute exsuperas, tanto me impensius aequum est

consulere atque omnis metuentem expendere casus.

—(12.19–21)

O youth of matchless spirit, the more you excel in proud valor, the more carefully it is right that I ponder and in fear weigh every chance.

Latinus's words *impensius*, *aequum*, and *expendere* together make up an etymological trope on the image of scales used for weighing out payment.<sup>80</sup> The adverb *impense* is derived from the verb *impendo*, meaning "to weigh out" or "to pay." As an adjective, *impensus* means "excessive," in terms of expense or emotion. Hence, as an adverb, *impense* means "immoderately," "lavishly," or "greatly," the manner in which Latinus feels obliged to consider what Turnus is proposing. The verb *expendere* derives from the same root *pendo*, and its primary meaning is also "to weigh out" or "to expend." Latinus must "weigh out" or "carefully consider" all possible outcomes of Turnus's proposal. In this context, the word *aequum*, together with *est*, does not mean only "it is right," but also evokes the image of the equal level of a balance, like that which Jupiter will hold when weighing the fates of Aeneas and Turnus (*duas aequato examine lances/sustinet*, 12.725–26).

Latinus's commodity language amounts to criticism of Turnus. It suggests that Turnus's tendency to view affairs as commodity exchange has forced Latinus himself and others to make similar, but unwelcome, calculations. The fact that Latinus delivers his criticism in subtly allusive speech makes it no less real. Latinus typically makes his points indirectly, particularly in his dealings with Turnus. In the earlier council, Latinus declares that he blames no one for the misfortunes of the Latins (*nec quemquam incuso*, 11.312) before proceeding to counsel negotiation against Turnus's calls for further war. And as he continues advising Turnus after this passage, Latinus asks permission to speak frankly (*sine me haec haud mollia fatu/sublatis aperire dolis*, 12.25–26), indicating that he had not done so just previously. He even takes responsibility for the start of the war (*arma impia sumpsit*, 12.31) when he had in fact opposed the efforts of Turnus to initiate it (7.596–97).

Latinus adds to his muted criticism a positive inducement. Just as Diomedes had counseled giving gifts to Aeneas, Latinus proposes resolving the conflict without a duel by granting Lavinia to Aeneas, and he of-

80. The definitions that follow are from *OLD*, s.v. *impense*, *expendo*, and *aequus*.

fers compensatory gifts to Turnus, including gold and another Latin bride (12.21–25). But Turnus has taken no part in reciprocal relations so far and does not change his habits at this crucial moment. Instead, he focuses on his own desires, speaking again in terms of trading his life for glory as he did at the close of the council scene.<sup>81</sup>

quam pro me curam geris, hanc precor, optime, pro me  
deponas letumque sinas pro laude pacisci.  
—(12.48–49)

The care you have on my behalf, most gracious lord, on my behalf, I  
pray, resign, and suffer me to barter death for fame.

It could be said that Turnus, like Euryalus, gets what he bargained for: in return for the courage he shows in welcoming his fate,<sup>82</sup> he earns a measure of renown from the lips of the poet. And, indeed, it is undeniable that Turnus acts here with the rash fortitude befitting a Homeric hero. But his commodity language again conveys the underlying conception that desire for goods, even heroic spoils and the glory they bring, cannot come without corruption, and that such desires are most often accompanied by self-interested calculation. Thus Turnus's bargain for glory is short-sighted, for he buys it at the cost of his own people's subjugation (*Rutulis . . . subactis*, 1.266), a doom that reconciliation through exchange of gifts could have prevented.

Turnus's words before his duel with Aeneas sum up the socioeconomic features with which Vergil defines his character. Turnus notionally aspires to the model of generosity and can delude himself that he acts accordingly, but at bottom he shares with his protectress Juno a mercantile view of the

81. Maguinness 1992 ad 12.48–49 notes that *pro laude pacisci* is financial language. Cf. Williams 1973 ad 12.49, who points out the parallel at 5.230, *uitamque uolunt pro laude pacisci*, words that describe the desire for glory of the crew of Cloanthus in the naval race (Hardie 1994 ad 9.206 notes that 5.230 parallels the commercial language surrounding the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus). This moment in the competition is a small-scale reflection of the larger action played out by Turnus. Despite the willingness of Cloanthus's crew to bargain in this way, they stand a good chance of losing the race (the crew of Mnestheus *fors aequatis cepissent praemia rostris*, 5.232) until Cloanthus vows sacrifices to the gods of the sea, without, however, stating what specifically he desires in return or invoking any past services (5.235–38). Cloanthus secures success by turning from a commodity expression of desire to a gesture that is as close as possible to reciprocity with the gods in his urgent situation. In contrast, Turnus spurns any reciprocal gestures and restates his resolve in commodity terms.

82. A show of courage partially undermined by his request for mercy at 12.931–38.

world that sees relationships in commodity terms and focuses on the satisfaction of his own excessive desires. Turnus attains a greater nobility than Juno, however, because Juno has little to lose from her actions, whereas Turnus faces deadly risks with courage, however misguided. Turnus also evokes sympathy as a creature who was ordained for failure by his creator. When Vergil has Allecto ignite a fire of frenzy in Turnus (7.456–57), he suggests that Turnus had the potential to act more moderately, but larger forces intervened to incite or at least catalyze his fury. In a similar way, Vergil himself creates characters who follow the Homeric heroic ethic of mixed reciprocity and commodity values, but, as it were, intervenes to prevent them from succeeding. He ensures that when Turnus and others act upon this ethic, their actions will appear awkward, and they will ultimately harm themselves and others grievously. In this way Vergil presents a starker opposition than we see in Homer between those who violate reciprocal principles and a champion of those principles. In this oppositional environment, violations of reciprocity become challenges that Aeneas must surmount, and he will only partially succeed.

### Aeneas

Given what we have learned so far, we might expect to find Aeneas assuming the role of the generous man who prefers virtuous reciprocity over mercantile commodity exchange. And indeed Aeneas, who leaves a legacy of *pietas* with which the Romans will surpass even the gods (12.838–39), duly prefers to cultivate reciprocal relations with divinities and mortals.<sup>83</sup> Where necessary, Vergil takes liberties with his epic inheritance to make this so. The early Roman epic poet Naevius has Aeneas and his companions carrying off gold as they flee from Troy;<sup>84</sup> Vergil's Aeneas leaves only with his *penates*, the figures of his household gods (2.717, 747). He later recovers his lost wealth in the form of gifts from his Trojan host Helenus (3.464–69, 483–85) that he then gives as gifts himself.<sup>85</sup> Vergil thus takes pains to ensure that Aeneas has as little involvement as possible with anything that smacks of money, trade, or commerce, preferring *hospitium* and gift exchange. Yet as the legacy of the Trojan violation of *hospitium* echoes

83. Cairns 1989, 20, shows that *pietas* (and its equivalents) and generosity are traits associated with the good king in ancient treatises on kingship. Syed 2005, 158, writes that “[Aeneas] always uses gift exchange and hospitality as a means to establishing relations. He never buys.”

84. Fr. 5 Morel.

85. Reed 2007, 97–98.

through the poem, Aeneas confronts others who do not share his ethic and repeatedly fails to forge the lasting reciprocal ties he seeks.

As part of the ongoing controversy over the pro- or anti-Augustan tendency of the *Aeneid*,<sup>86</sup> scholars have debated whether Aeneas remains *pius* when he rages after the death of Pallas and ultimately kills Turnus. Some have argued that it is an act of *pietas* to Evander, Pallas, and his heir Ascanius to kill Turnus, citing among other evidence the interpretations to this effect of Servius and Donatus. Others note that Vergil leaves off referring to Aeneas as *pius* after line 12.311, and from this and other evidence argue that Aeneas abandons his *pietas* at the close of the poem.<sup>87</sup> A closer consideration of Aeneas from a socioeconomic perspective suggests an intermediate interpretation, in which he neither loses nor fully retains his *pietas* but struggles on with his signal quality substantially diminished. Engagement in reciprocity is central to the practice of *pietas*, so it is appropriate that Vergil's final reference to Aeneas as *pius* comes during Aeneas's last attempt at a reciprocal relationship with the Latins, the arrangement of a duel between himself and Turnus.<sup>88</sup> This transformation has its roots in Aeneas's evolving relationship with Evander and ultimately culminates in his killing of Turnus at the sight of Pallas's baldric. My discussion of Aeneas traces this rhythm of the commodity and reciprocal exchanges surrounding the death of Pallas up to the poem's closing moments.

As often happens in the *Aeneid*, the larger pattern of conflict emerges from relatively small beginnings. Before Turnus's duel with Pallas, he speaks of how Pallas is "owed" to him alone (*solī mihi Pallas/debetur*, 10.442–43). The commodity connotations of this expression resonate through the confrontations that follow, so we must briefly take account of the use of the word *debere* in the poem. The verb can express simple necessity or can be used, as it is by Turnus, to mean "owe." Turnus is the first character in the poem to use the word *debere* to lay claim to an object

86. For overviews of this controversy see Harrison 1990, 1–20; Perkell 1999, 14–22; and Edgeworth and Stem 2005. Among more recent contributions, Thomas 2001 contends that the very early reception of the *Aeneid* created the basis for pro-Augustan readings, which Galinsky 2003 disputes. Thomas 2005 tracks opposing references to the Iron Age of Jupiter versus the Golden Age of Saturn in the poem, arguing that Aeneas's mission ultimately represents the imposition of a new Iron Age.

87. Beginning with Servius ad 12.940: *nam Euandri intuitu Pallantis ulciscitur mortem*, Williams 1973 ad 11.177f.; Stahl 1990, 199, and Horsfall 2000a, 207, among others, advance the former argument. Horsfall 2000a, 207, and Traina 1984a, 97, also give references for the latter, a position generally advocated by, e.g., Putnam 1984, 235–36, and Farron 1986.

88. Traina 1984a, 93.



"owed" to him,<sup>89</sup> in particular a human life,<sup>90</sup> a usage that Evander and Aeneas adopt.

When Aeneas hears of the death of Pallas, he rages in battle against the Latins, thinking constantly of Pallas, Evander, and their *hospitium*:

Pallas, Euandrus, in ipsis  
omnia sunt oculis, *mensae quae aduena* primas  
tunc adiit, dextraeque datae.  
—(10.515–17)

Pallas, Evander, everything is before his eyes—the board to which he came then, a stranger, and the right hands pledged.

Aeneas's visions recall Pallas's own invocation of his guest-friendship with Hercules some fifty lines earlier:

"per patris hospitium et *mensas, quas aduena* adisti,  
te precor, Alcide, coeptis ingentibus adsis."  
—(10.460–61)

By my father's welcome, and the table to which you came as a stranger,  
I beseech you, Alcides, aid my great enterprise.

89. Aeneas uses the word *debere* once previously in connection with the repeated notion of Italy as fated to the Trojans (7.120), echoing a phrase of Anchises' (3.184). Mercury too, in the process of recalling Aeneas to his mission, tells him to have a care for the country that is owed to Ascanius (*Ascanium . . . respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus/debentur*, 4.274–76). For Anchises and Aeneas, the word *debere* expresses their recognition of what has been promised them by the gods, but it is not used to assert any claim. Each approaches the idea of such a debt rather indirectly: Anchises speaks of Cassandra having foretold that such a land was owed to the Trojan people, and Aeneas uses his father's phrase only after he has reached Italy and attained the goal of finding his new homeland. In contrast, Mercury reminds Aeneas more directly of what he owes to Ascanius, a role that seems well suited to the god of commerce. Other uses of *debere* showing a more general sense of obligation or necessity include Anchises' explanation that bodies are "owed" to spirits in the underworld (6.714); a rumor among Trojans that the day has come to found the city walls "owed" them (7.145); Venus's recollection that the walls of Troy were "due" to fall (8.375) and reminder to Vulcan that she did not ask him then for any favors even though she "owed" (8.379) much to the children of Priam; the delay of time by the *Parcae* "due" before Cybele's ships turned into nymphs (9.108); and Mezentius's regret that he lived on past the death of his son despite "owing" penalties to his people (10.853).

90. Cf. the life of Arruns being owed to the gods in payment for the death of Camilla: *fatis debitus Arruns*, 11.759. On this analogy, Turnus makes himself an arbiter of justice like the gods.

The reminiscence enacts the continuity of social bonds that the reciprocal *hospitium* relations create, showing how Aeneas is linked to Hercules, whose position he assumes here, through Evander and Pallas. Aeneas's vision also shows the importance he places upon this reciprocal bond, one that is strengthened by his emotional ties to Evander and Pallas. His fury arises not only from his feelings for Evander and Pallas, but also from his frustration that each one of these ties he has tried to create, with Dido, with Latinus, and with Evander, has been undone to disastrous effect. His primary mode of negotiating in the world continues to fail him.

In his rage, Aeneas casts his spear at a minor opponent named Magus, who manages to duck it and embraces Aeneas's knees in supplication. Attempting to convince Aeneas to spare his life, Magus asks him to take pity on his parents and children, promises him great quantities of gold and silver from his parents' house, and argues that his single death cannot contribute much to a Trojan victory (10.524–29). Aeneas rejects these offers, however:

"argenti atque auri memoras quae multa talenta  
gnatis parce tuis. belli commercia Turnus  
sustulit ista prior iam tum Pallante perempto.  
hoc patris Anchisae manes, hoc sentit Iulus."  
—(10.531–34)

"Those many talents of silver and gold that you tell of, keep them for your sons. Such trafficking in war Turnus put away before now, even at the time when Pallas was slain. Thus judges my father Anchises' spirit, thus Iulus."

Given what we know of Aeneas, we might well expect him to refuse Magus's offer of ransom. He refers contemptuously to the *commercium* Magus offers as *ista* ("that trafficking of yours"), showing his disdain for the thought of engaging in such commodity trade, particularly on the battlefield. Aeneas even seems to cast the very idea back upon Magus with bitter irony. When he tells Magus to "spare his talents" (*parce . . . talenta*) for his children, he plays disparagingly upon the idea of the careful calculation of mercantile commodity exchange, hinting that if Magus's children are anything like him, they might prefer money to their father's life.

Aeneas thus rejects his one opportunity in the poem for direct commodity exchange. Vergil further distances Aeneas from such commodity trade with two "improvements" in Aeneas's behavior relative to his epic

predecessors. In the Iliadic model for this scene, Achilles likewise rejects the ransom of his defeated opponent, Lycaon (*Il.* 21.99–104). But he does not always scorn commodity exchange: he earlier sold Lycaon on Lemnos for one hundred oxen (21.78–79). Needless to say, Aeneas never sells captives or takes ransom for their liberty, making his rejection of *commercias* seem more one of principle than circumstance. Furthermore, the striking juxtaposition of the words *belli commercia* echoes the phrase *cauponantes bellum* (“war traders”),<sup>91</sup> which Pyrrhus of Epirus, an early historical enemy of Rome, utters in Ennius’s *Annales*.<sup>92</sup> Vergil elevates Aeneas’s diction by comparison to Ennius: the word *commercias* certainly has its commodity force here, but its abstract meanings render it more noble than the word *cauponantes*, with its clear reference to the petty tradesman (*caupo*). Vergil will not have his protagonist allude to such a tradesman even to spurn him. But a second look at this passage shows there is more to it than a simple rejection of commodity traffic by Aeneas. Despite this marked distancing, Aeneas is not as fundamentally averse to *belli commercia* as his dismissive word *ista* would indicate. He says that he will not participate in such trade because Turnus, by killing Pallas, has made it impossible for him to do so, leaving open the prospect that he might have accepted such ransom were Pallas still alive.

Overall, in his response to Magus Aeneas appears to both accept and reject the idea of *commercium*, particularly when it concerns lives. We see where this dilemma leads when Aeneas proceeds to kill Magus:

sic fatus galeam laeua tenet atque reflexa  
 ceruice orantis capulo tenus applicat ensem.  
 —(10.535–36)

So speaking, he grasps the helmet with his left hand and, bending back the suppliant’s neck, drives the sword in up to the hilt.

When Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, kills Priam earlier in the poem, the act is described in similar terms:

91. The description of this phrase as a “striking juxtaposition” belongs to Harrison 1997 ad 10.532–33.

92. Harrison 1997 ad 10.532–33, who cites this possible parallel from *Ann.* 184 Skutsch. Ennius himself would seem to have adapted the idea from an equally mercantile turn of phrase in Aesch. *Sept.* 545: ἐλθὼν δ’ εἴκειν οὐ καπηλεύσειν μάχην (Williams 1968, 255).

implicuit comam laeua, dextraque coruscum  
 extulit ac lateri capulo tenus abdidit ensem.  
 —(2.552–53)

He wound his left hand in his hair, while with the right he raised high  
 the flashing sword and buried it to the hilt in his side.

In his last words Priam condemns Pyrrhus for failing to participate in the sorts of reciprocal relations, including of suppliant to victor, that his father Achilles had, and so condemns him, in marked commodity language, as un-aristocratic.<sup>93</sup> The similar actions of Pyrrhus and Aeneas, both described with commodity language, suggest a certain alignment of personalities: even as Aeneas rejects the idea of *commercia*, he also withholds *clementia*.

Aeneas therefore comes to think and act in something close to commodity terms despite himself, a transformation underlined by two other aspects of his address to Magus. When Aeneas speaks of the dead Pallas as *Pallante perempto*, he uses a word for killing, *perimere*, that is conspicuously archaic and poetic.<sup>94</sup> But the phrase *Pallante perempto* also calls attention to itself as a close parallel to the words of the narrator just thirty lines earlier, where he said that Turnus would one day wish for a great price “to have bought an unscathed Pallas” (*emptum/intactum Pallanta*, 10.503–4). This statement pointed out the misguided nature of Turnus’s commodity perspective, which he would come to regret at his death. Although Aeneas’s word *perimere* (or *peremere*) does not have a primary commodity meaning like the word *emere*, the similarity of the root *empt-*, the common reference to Pallas, and the proximity of the passages make Aeneas’s words a reflection of Turnus’s commodity mentality.

Magus’s own words contain an image that also indicates the change in Aeneas. Magus urges Aeneas to spare his life as one that will not “tip the scales” toward Trojan victory (*non hic uictoria Teucrum/uertitur aut anima una dabit discrimina tanta*, 10.528–29). The metaphor of the balance recalls the “scales of war” of *Il.* 22.209–13 and anticipates those of *Aen.* 12.725–27.<sup>95</sup> But this image is itself based upon the use of scales in commerce, a context brought to prominence here by Magus’s reference to his “weights of wrought and unwrought gold” (*auri pondera facti/infec-*

93. 2.535–39, discussed in chapter 1.

94. Axelson 1945, 67, cited in Harrison 1997 ad 10.315, 532–33.

95. Harrison 1997 ad 10.528–29. He adds that “*uertitur* sees Magus’ life as a pivot, while *dabit discrimina* suggests tipping the balance.”

*tique mihi*, 10.527–28), as well as other wealth, including his great house (*domus alta*, 10.526) and “talents of chased silver” (*talenta/caelati argenti*, 10.526–27). Magus’s choice of scale imagery in his effort to persuade Aeneas says something about his own conceptual world, particularly that he too thinks in commodity terms about what his life is worth. But by proffering the image of the scale, Magus also figuratively places it in Aeneas’s hands. Just as Jupiter metes out justice and the fates of mortals with this instrument emblematic of commodity exchange, so Aeneas will decide on this occasion which way the balance tips.

Taken as a whole, then, Aeneas’s encounter with Magus illustrates the suspension of his usual habit of seeking reciprocal exchange, the place that the mercantile nature of his opponents plays in that vacillation, his adoption under duress of a similar attitude, and the destruction that will result. Though he seems to reject *belli commercia* here, Aeneas must take this trade up, and in so doing will perforce help supply Juno with the *mercede* of blood she demands from both sides. There is thus a further irony in Aeneas’s declaration that *belli commercia Turnus/sustulit*. Behind the primary meaning that Turnus has “done away with” (*sustulit*) such commerce of war, lies a secondary possibility. Like the German *aufheben*, the verb *tollo* has two opposite meanings, not only “to destroy,” but also “to increase in magnitude” or “to rouse.”<sup>96</sup> And indeed, through the effect of Pallas’s death upon Aeneas, Turnus increases the commerce of war, to the detriment of himself and many others.

Aeneas’s internal conflict comes to a head through his continuing interaction with Evander after the death of Pallas. At the opening of Book 11, Aeneas greets the dawn by giving honor to the dead, Pallas foremost among them. In his lament, he imagines Evander continuing to make vows and offer gifts to the gods in vain:

et nunc ille quidem spe multum captus inani  
fors et uota facit cumulatque altaria donis.  
nos iuuenem exanimum et nil iam caelestibus ullis  
debentem uano maesti comitamur honore.  
—(11.49–52)

And now he, much beguiled by vain hope, is perhaps offering vows and heaping the altars high with gifts; we in sorrow attend with empty rites the lifeless son, who owes no more to any gods of heaven.

96. OLD s.v. *tollo* 3d, 9b.

Evander has relied upon his reciprocal relationships with Hercules and the other gods for continued assistance. Aeneas's image captures the idea of Evander trying in vain to make good on these ties for the preservation of his son. But this image also conveys Aeneas's frustration that his careful maintenance of divine and mortal reciprocal relationships—the many gifts he himself has placed on altars—has been equally powerless to prevent the deaths of those he cares for. His disillusionment shows through when he pronounces that the honors given to the dead are empty (*uano . . . honore*). Furthermore, when Aeneas speaks of Pallas as someone who no longer “owes” anything to the gods of heaven, he may be indicating that Pallas is now entrusted to the gods of the underworld rather than those of the heavens.<sup>97</sup> It is notable, though, that he casts this transformation as another reciprocal relationship between gods and mortals that has failed. By speaking in terms of what Pallas no longer “owes” to the gods, Aeneas puts this relationship in purely commodity terms. Aeneas's faith in the *gratia* of the gods has been diminished by their successive failures to demonstrate goodwill.

From contemplation of the gods' relationship to Evander and Pallas, Aeneas turns to his own obligations to Evander. He sends an honor guard to accompany the body of Pallas back home, and the narrator explains his thoughts in doing so,<sup>98</sup> saying that this grant, though small consolation, is “owed” to wretched Evander (*solacia luctus/exigua ingentis, misero sed debita patri*, 11.62–63). Aeneas means this as a generous gesture, like the gift of the cloak made by Dido that he lays over the body of Pallas (11.72–74). But this ill-omened gift signals that Aeneas's *hospitium* with Evander will fail just as it did with Dido, and his thought of what is “owed” has the commodity structure of a final reckoning: Aeneas shows his gratitude toward Evander but also contemplates ending the mutual obligation that has brought pain to both sides.

After sending off Pallas's body, Aeneas receives an embassy from the Latins seeking a burial truce. Aeneas shows his frustration at his inability to negotiate an end to the conflict when he responds to the delegation that he would as gladly strike a comprehensive peace treaty (*pacem . . . concedere*, 11.110–11) as one for burial of the dead. He blames Latinus for spurning his offer of *hospitium* and turning to war:

97. This is the interpretation of Horsfall 2003 ad 11.51.

98. Horsfall 2003 ad 11.61: “The subjunctives of purpose show that Vergil's words here reflect Aeneas's thoughts and intentions.”

nec ueni, nisi fata locum sedemque dedissent,  
nec bellum cum gente gero; rex nostra reliquit  
hospitia et Turni potius se credidit armis.

—(II.112–14)

I would not have come, had not fate assigned me here a place and home,  
nor do I wage war with your people; it is your king who forsook our al-  
liance and preferred to trust himself to Turnus's sword.

Yet Latinus was not a primary mover of war on the Latin side, and it was Latinus, rather than Aeneas, who spoke of forming a bond of *hospitium* before the intervention of Allecto made that impossible.<sup>99</sup> Aeneas may not give Latinus due credit, but he no doubt would have preferred to create such a bond had circumstances allowed. In his frustration over the failure of previous reciprocal relationships, with Dido and now with Evander, Aeneas interprets the rush to war on the Latin side as undoing a reciprocal relationship that existed in his mind, even if it had not yet taken shape in reality.

When the body of Pallas ultimately arrives in Pallanteum, Evander laments his loss, recalling his *hospitium* relationship with Aeneas but casting no blame:

“nec uos arguerim, Teucri, nec foedera nec quas  
iunximus hospitio dextras: sors ista senectae  
debita erat nostrae.”

—(II.164–66)

“I would not blame you, Trojans, nor our covenant, nor the hands we  
clasped in friendship: this fate was owed to my gray hairs.”

By acknowledging that he has received what he was “owed” (*debita*) by the heavens in connection with his guest-friendship with Aeneas, Evander may be recognizing, in similar language, the truth of Turnus's statement that his *hospitium* with Aeneas would cost him dearly (*haud illi stabunt Aeneia paruo/hospitia*, 10.494–95). But Evander's thoughts soon turn to what Aeneas in fact owes him. He demands the death of Turnus in return for the loss of Pallas.<sup>100</sup>

99. Points noted by Horsfall 2003 ad II.113, II.114. Latinus speaks of potential *hospitium* with Aeneas at 7.202, 7.264.

100. In line 173 I follow the manuscript tradition in printing *armis* rather than the reading *aruis* proposed by Bentley and printed by Mynors.

"tu quoque nunc stares immanis truncus in armis,  
 esset par aetas et idem si robur ab annis,  
 Turne. sed infelix Teucros quid demoror armis?  
 uadite et haec memores regi mandata referte:  
 quod uitam moror inuisam Pallante perempto  
 dextera causa tua est, Turnum gnatoque patrique  
 quam debere uides. meritis uacat hic tibi solus  
 fortunaequae locus. non uitae gaudia quaero,  
 nec fas, sed gnato manis perferre sub imos."  
 —(II.173–81)

"You, too, Turnus, would now be standing, a monstrous trunk arrayed  
 in arms, had your age and strength of years been like his! But why do  
 I, poor wretch, stay the Teucrians from conflict? Go, and forget not  
 to bear this message to your king: if I drag on a life that is hateful  
 now that Pallas is slain, the reason is your right hand, which you know  
 owes Turnus to son and to father. That field alone is open for your mer-  
 its and your fortune. I ask not for joy in life—that cannot be—but to  
 bear the word to my son in the shades below."

In his message to Aeneas, Evander puts his demand in the most exigent terms: he is waiting only for Turnus's death so that he himself can die peacefully; Aeneas can have no greater priority than carrying out the duty he "owes" (*debere*) Evander. This choice of words suggests how much Pallas's death has affected him, for earlier it was Turnus who spoke of Pallas's life as "owed" to him. Evander's urgent demand, in commodity terms, shows that his engagement in the war has forced him to abandon the virtuous combination of generous and frugal qualities he had maintained. Like Aeneas, he has begun to take a different view of their relationship. Aeneas intended to give Evander something toward what he owed him, but Evander believes that he is due much more, much sooner. Evander's change in perspective is, like that of Aeneas, indicated by an oblique echo of Turnus's words. He speaks of the dead Pallas with the words used by Aeneas, *Pallante perempto*, which themselves recalled the phrase *emptum* . . . *Pallanta* used to describe Turnus. The indirection of this verbal echo encapsulates the fact that Evander, like Aeneas, does not fully arrive at the mercantile perspective of Turnus. In his boast at the death of Pallas, Turnus chose to imagine Evander reckoning the costs of his *hospitium* with Aeneas. Although the terms of this prediction revealed more about Turnus's own disposition than Evander's, the prediction nevertheless comes



to pass. The emerging commodity relationship of Evander and Aeneas is the devolved remnant of their reciprocal bond of *hospitium*. Their continuing obligation takes commodity form: Evander compels Aeneas into a quid pro quo exchange that is foreign to his nature.

Aeneas makes one final attempt at building a reciprocal tie in the treaty for a duel with Turnus. The treaty could have taken commodity form by referring simply to the creation of finite and equivalent obligations on both sides, but in a reciprocal gesture Aeneas promises more, telling the Latins that should he win he will give away military command to the Latins and keep only the sacred offices for himself (12.192–93). Vergil refers to Aeneas as *pious* for the last time as he makes a final attempt to re-establish a reciprocal bond between Trojans and Latins. Aeneas urges both sides to stop their renewed fighting and adhere to the terms of the treaty (12.311). As this last prospect for a reciprocal agreement decays, Aeneas for the first time insists that he is due something. Echoing both Turnus and Evander, he declares that the rites of the duel treaty mean that Turnus is “owed” to him: *Turnum debent haec iam mihi sacra*, 12. 317. As this statement suggests, in his conduct of the conflict with the Latins, Aeneas has abandoned the idea of reciprocity inherent in *pietas* and so from this point no longer acts in full accord with its ideal.

Vergil shows the importance of Aeneas’s change while summing up the interplay of economic concepts in the complex consummation of the poem in Turnus’s death. Pallas’s baldric is central to the narrative of this closing scene: Aeneas begins to yield to Turnus’s entreaties (*magis cunctantem flectere sermo/coeperat*, 12.940–41) but ultimately kills him after catching sight of the baldric. The Danaid scene represented on the baldric has itself been seen to reflect in various ways upon Aeneas’s slaying of Turnus.<sup>101</sup> Scholars who read the killing as an act of *pietas* take Aeneas’s reaction to the baldric as evidence that he acts out of obligation to Evander and the memory of Pallas. But it also represents an inversion of the economic norms established throughout the poem. One part of this inversion we have already considered: in behavior that contrasts with Aeneas’s own, Turnus reverses Roman standards by keeping the baldric rather than dedicating it to the gods. In this sense, the final scene marks the victory of a champion of reciprocal relations over an opponent who privileges the mercantile.

But the baldric also represents the contradictions within Aeneas’s own position. Up to this point, Aeneas has dealt with precious objects only as

101. Horsfall 2000a, 212.

gifts in reciprocal relationships. Aeneas's reaction to Pallas's baldric is his first acknowledgment in the poem of a precious object worn by an opponent. He is not seeking spoils in the manner of Euryalus, Camilla, or Turnus, but merely responding to the memory that the baldric triggers, of his fresh, close bonds with Evander and Pallas. Nevertheless, Aeneas's exceptional behavior shows that the breakdown of the reciprocal relationship he strove to maintain with Evander (echoed in the *hospitium* violation of the Danaids on the baldric)<sup>102</sup> has finally driven him to abandon his efforts at reciprocity. Just as Aeneas became incapable of the generosity necessary to grant *clementia* to Magus, here he thinks only of trading Turnus's life back to Pallas and Evander in repayment of his debt to them, expressed earlier by Evander with the words *dextera causa tua est, Turnum gna-toque patrique/quam debere uides*, 11.178–79.

Aeneas's actions in connection with the baldric thus have a commodity basis, though he still lacks the desire for material objects associated with commodity behavior. Even as Aeneas kills Turnus, however, he resists the idea of such commodity exchange by trying to extricate himself from the transaction. Aeneas displaces responsibility for Turnus's killing when he says repeatedly that Pallas is carrying it out rather than he himself:

Pallas te hoc uulnere, Pallas  
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.  
—(12.948–49)

“Pallas it is, Pallas who sacrifices you with this stroke, and takes retri-bution from your guilty blood.”

Evander has told Aeneas that Turnus's life is owed to Pallas and himself, so in his mind Aeneas has Pallas kill Turnus in a confused combination of reciprocal “sacrifice” (*immolat*) and precise commodity punishment. Pallas “takes” (*sumit*) the measure of Turnus's punishment from his blood.

Here as earlier, Aeneas's brush with commodity exchange under duress aligns his mentality to a certain extent with that of Turnus, but his resistance to this perspective continues to set him apart. The baldric is a reminder not only of his relationship with Evander and Pallas, but also of the other failed relationships with Dido and Latinus that brought him to this point. Burdened with the Trojan legacy and the continuing collapse of reciprocity, Aeneas is pressed into a web of commodity relations, such that

102. Harrison 1998, 228–29.

he, like Turnus, foreshortens the usual association between mercantile behavior and social disorder into a direct connection between commodity behavior and killing. His loyalty to his reciprocal ties with others, his *pietas*, is in these final moments alive, but degraded against his will.

The socioeconomic roles of Aeneas and Turnus therefore justify Johnson's contention that they "become victims of a kind of mechanical malevolence that negates the dignity and courage of both of them."<sup>103</sup> The image of Jupiter weighing the fates of Aeneas and Turnus in a balance anticipates the partial equivalence of Aeneas and Turnus at the end of the poem:

Iuppiter ipse duas aequato examine lances  
sustinet et fata imponit diuersa duorum,  
quem damnet labor et quo uergat pondere letum.  
—(12.725–27)

Jupiter himself holds up two scales in even balance, and lays in them the diverse destinies of both—who[m] the strife dooms, and with whose weight death sinks down.

Vergil adapts the image from *Iliad* 22.211–15, where Zeus weighs the fates of Achilles and Hector before their final duel. As scholars have noted, however, Vergil, unlike Homer, does not represent Jupiter's scales as inclining to show the differing fates of the protagonists.<sup>104</sup> This leaves both Aeneas and Turnus in a state of equivalence on the scales, although it soon becomes clear who will triumph.<sup>105</sup>

The equivalence of Aeneas and Turnus on Jupiter's scales gains significance not only from its relation to the Homeric model, however, but also from the only other moment in the poem where Aeneas is associated with the image of a balance, his killing of Magus. In that scene, the strong commodity connotations of the balance are made explicit by reference to the weights of gold (*auri pondera*, 10.527), and Magus places Aeneas in the role of the one who will hold the balance and judge which way it tips. The image of Jupiter's scales, although clearly a symbol of the determination of fate, also has a concreteness to it more specific than that of Homer, which recalls the ordinary use of a balance in commerce. Vergil mentions

103. Johnson 1976, 133.

104. See Horsfall 2000a, 211 n. 130, for references.

105. Dyson 2001, 120–24, reviews this and other similarities between the two figures.

the weight (*pondere*), as in the Magus episode, as well as the tongue (*examine*) and pans (*lances*).<sup>106</sup> These two instances of scales connected with Aeneas are linked in their concrete commercial details, but Aeneas's role is reversed from one to the other: rather than Aeneas holding the balance, Jupiter weighs Aeneas's fate along with that of Turnus. This reversal illustrates how the character who most tried to avoid involvement in the commerce of war in the end cannot. He is instead weighed out in just such an exchange. Although Turnus dies in the duel, Aeneas will also suffer an unfortunate fate: he will live only a short while longer with the loved ones for whom he has struggled before he must leave them to join the celestial gods.<sup>107</sup> From this perspective, Jupiter's reference to Aeneas as "owed" to the heavens (12.795) takes on an ominous cast, suggesting that Aeneas has paid a high price in toil and separation from his loved ones.

The fate of Aeneas in socioeconomic terms recapitulates the fate of the Republic whose destruction Vergil witnessed. If, as Cicero contended, the strength of the Republic lay in networks of reciprocal allegiance, then its downfall arrived when these allegiances were bought and sold in transactions like Caesar's spectacular bribe of Curio. Vergil plays this sort of crisis out on a grand, mythical scale in the *Aeneid*, but he also concentrates it in the character of Aeneas as a representative of Roman mores. Cicero struggled in his own imperfect way, as no doubt did many of his compatriots, to build alliances and social bonds that would stave off war. To this extent, he bears a resemblance to Aeneas; yet unlike Cicero, Vergil's protagonist has the power to impose his will when his efforts at reciprocity fail. However unwillingly he makes the choice to do so, he nevertheless comes away diminished.

### Ascanius

Aeneas's son Ascanius, in his promising youth, would seem to offer an alternative to his father's fate. We might expect Ascanius to inherit his father's preference for pursuing goals through reciprocity, and Vergil does in fact associate Ascanius with the peace and prosperity that reciprocal ties would ideally deliver. We are reminded five times that Ascanius is the "hope of Rome."<sup>108</sup> Unlike in other versions of the story, Vergil makes As-

106. Williams 1973 ad 12.725f.

107. On the unfortunate nature of Aeneas's fate after the close of the poem as foretold within it, see O'Hara 1990, 89–97; Dyson 2001, 94, 229; and Gross 2003, 152–54.

108. 1.556, 4.274, 6.364, 10.524, 12.168.

canus too young to take a significant part in the fighting,<sup>109</sup> and in this respect he differs from one of his models, the Homeric Telemachus.<sup>110</sup> Ascanius therefore does not become entangled in the sorts of compromises that attend his father's full engagement in political and military affairs. In his one act of war, he vows gifts to Jupiter upon his success (*sollemnia dona*, 9.626),<sup>111</sup> without invoking any past services, and refutes the charges of luxury cast against the Trojans by the Italian Numanus Remulus (9.614–20) by killing him (9.630–34).

Furthermore, Vergil associates Ascanius in at least three ways with the Golden Age. First, Ascanius is contrasted with his enemy Numanus Remulus, an embodiment of the Italian Iron Age.<sup>112</sup> Second, Apollo tells Ascanius after his killing of Numanus Remulus that all wars will cease under his descendants (*iure omnia bella/gente sub Assaraci fato uentura resident*, 9.642–43). Finally, Ascanius is once actually and once hypothetically taken off by his grandmother Venus into her idyllic gardens (1.657–94, 10.44–55), which in their eternal bounty recall the description of the Golden Age in Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*.<sup>113</sup> That age Vergil had endowed with some clear economic attributes: the period lacked "commerce" (*merces*, 39), which is listed as one sort of "deception" (*fraus*, 31). In terms of Roman economic ideology, this left only the possibility of reciprocal exchange that is expressed in the Golden Age as nature giving freely, requiring no labor but only gratitude in return.<sup>114</sup> Traces of this Golden Age cling to the figure of Ascanius in the *Aeneid*, in the lush bounty of the garden of Venus he visits, and the end of wars as predicted by Apollo. These traces represent the fulfillment of the promise of reciprocity.

Yet there are also countervailing suggestions that Ascanius will bring an end to the Golden Age,<sup>115</sup> and his association with the Golden Age period and conduct toward Numanus must be weighed against his involvement with destructive gifts. In the Dido episode, Ascanius's beauty has

109. In Cato's version, Ascanius kills Mezentius in a duel after Aeneas has defeated Turnus and ascended to the heavens. See Petrini 1997, 88 with n. 6, and Heinze 1908, 172, who cites Servius on 1.267, 4.620, 9.745. In a tradition cited by Dionysius, it is Ascanius who kills Lausus (*Ant. Rom.* 1.65.3).

110. Maurach 1968, 365–67.

111. Dickie 1985, 166. Cf. Thomas 1982, 99.

112. This contrast is suggested by the juxtaposition of the words *aeuum* and *ferro* in the description of Numanus, along with his actions (Hardie 1994 ad 9.609, 621–71).

113. Wlosok 1967, 142.

114. See Bowditch 2001, 132–35.

115. Putnam 1998, 103–12, and Thomas 2005, 140–41, see Ascanius's killing of Silvia's stag as an indication that he and the Julio-Claudians foreclose the possibility of a Golden Age and usher in a new Age of Iron. Cf. Thomas 2001, 1–7.

much the same effect as a gift, proving noxious to Dido, although it is Cupid who assumes his guise. Ascanius bears direct responsibility for his extravagant promise of gifts to Nisus and Euryalus before they set out on their mission, a promise that could only inflame the desire for spoils that gets them killed (9.257–313).<sup>116</sup> Ascanius's promise echoes the failed attempt of Agamemnon to placate Achilles (*Il.* 9.121–57),<sup>117</sup> so it is no surprise to find, among the gifts he offers, an object received from Dido, which portends disaster not only through association with her fate,<sup>118</sup> but also through broken reciprocal ties with Carthage. Ascanius also makes his promise in decided commodity terms, asking Nisus and Euryalus what rewards he could possibly think of to “pay” (*solui*, 9.253) them “in return for their praiseworthy acts” (*pro laudibus istis*, 9.252), echoing Euryalus's earlier declaration that he would consider great honor to have been acquired cheaply even if it came at the cost of his life (9.205–6).<sup>119</sup> This hint of commodity trade corresponds to another Iliadic parallel to Ascanius's gift giving: his offer of Turnus's horse and armor echoes Dolon's request for the horse and chariot of Achilles (*Il.* 10.321–23).<sup>120</sup>

Ascanius thus oscillates through the range of economic types. Part of this unsteadiness no doubt reflects his youth—he is still trying out various ways of acting and testing extremes—but it is also suggestive for his role as the representative of Rome's future. His potential prompts the question of what kind of economic behavior will prevail as the dominant ethic. Is the idealized reciprocity hinted at in Ascanius a possible goal? Will the sort of destructive extravagance he shows prevail, the same sort that led Sallust and Livy to refrain even from praising the liberality of great Romans for fear of condoning prodigality?<sup>121</sup> Or will the same type of mercantile attitudes at which Ascanius's behavior hints, and which ensnare his father, hold sway at Rome, promoting the decline Sallust saw in the late Republic, where everything was for sale?

116. Hardie 1994 ad 9.263–74 notes the extravagance of the promises of Ascanius. Meriam 2002, 859, writes of the “heedless enthusiasm and immaturity” of Ascanius.

117. Hardie 1994 ad 9.263–74.

118. Murgia 1987, 53.

119. Hardie 1994 ad 9.253.

120. Hardie 1994 ad 9.263–74.

121. In contrast to authors of the early Empire, Sallust and Livy seem to avoid praising great Romans for their *liberalitas*, and Cicero himself, even though he honors the ideal of the generous man, shows a guarded attitude toward the concept (Manning 1985, 75–78). This circumspection seems to be a reaction to the way that *liberalitas* had become *prodigalitas*, which helped precipitate civil war. The word *liberalitas* was most often used of giving by superiors to inferiors, but Cicero and other sources make it clear that the giving among equals which Cicero called *beneficentia* could come under the same cloud.

auaritia fidem, probitatem ceterasque artis bonas subuortit; pro his superbiam, crudelitatem, deos neglegere, omnia uenalia habere edocuit.  
(*Cat.* 10)

Avarice overturned good faith, uprightness and the other moral qualities. In their place it taught arrogance, cruelty, neglect of the gods and the belief that everything could be bought and sold.<sup>122</sup>

Vergil leaves each of these outcomes open in Ascanius, summing up the possibilities for the socioeconomic behavior explored in the *Aeneid* with a figure representing an equivocal future. In the end, however, the experience of Aeneas is most suggestive of the prospects for socioeconomic values at Rome. His failure indicates that Republican *fides* and *gratia* cannot overcome mercantile distortions of reciprocal values. The poem's one scene of unproblematic gift giving in the future, engraved on Aeneas's shield, portrays Augustus accepting gifts from conquered nations vowing allegiance (8.721). Elite Romans effectively occupied the same position as the foreign kings on Aeneas' shield, for the ultimate power to shape political events through gifts and favors now lay in the hands of Augustus alone.<sup>123</sup> The order and majesty of this scene suggests that, once reciprocity among Roman peers dissolved, a system of vertical reciprocal relations with one potentate at the apex may have been the only alternative to anarchy.

122. Translation from Earl 1967, 19.

123. As Tacitus writes of Augustus at *Ann.* 1.2.1, *militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine otii pellexit*.



PART II

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The Triumph of Venality:  
Lucan's *Civil War*







## CHAPTER THREE

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# Reciprocity Exposed

Lucan's epic *Civil War* has been aptly characterized as anti-Vergilian.<sup>1</sup> Lucan sets his narrative in a historical rather than mythological period and removes the Olympian gods as significant actors.<sup>2</sup> He employs modes of declamation, copious *sententiae*, bold rhetorical figures, and repeated metrical schemes to a degree fundamentally incompatible with Vergilian poetics.<sup>3</sup> He also takes a very different approach to representing contemporary moral standards. Vergil presents opposing principles, such as the individual interest versus community welfare, in a balanced way which requires his audience to adjudicate between them. Lucan's epic, in addition to being socially static like the *Aeneid*, is also morally static. There are variations in the dominant corruption of his epic world, but few alternatives. Cato, the only major exception, remains unchanging in his apparent moral perfection, isolated and inimitable. The poem has many sources of dynamism, from the progress of the narrative to Lucan's rhetorical effusions, but it is the narrator, more than any of the characters, who shows deep moral engagement through his struggle to come to terms with the civil war and the state of Roman society. The dissent and dismay of the

1. So often, in fact, that that "Lucan's anti-Virgilianism is by now a commonplace" (Martindale 1993, 48). For two recent contributions to this perspective, see Eigler 2005 and Tesoriero 2005. As Thomas 2001, 83–84, cautions, however, it is important to keep in mind how often Lucan amplifies one side of "oppositional voices *within* Virgil." Further references at Nosarti 2002–3, 172.

2. "Much of Virgil's material is what we would today call 'myth' or 'legend.' Lucan rehistoricizes the genre, to expose Virgil's partially hidden subtext, in the process collapsing traditional distinctions between oratory, history and epic poetry, to the dismay of some ancient (and modern) critics" (Martindale 1993, 48).

3. On Lucan's relationship to Vergil, see Heitland and Haskins 1887, cviii–cxxvi; Ahl 1976, 64–81; Fantham 1992, 32; Tarrant 1997, 65–67; and Narducci 2002, 75–87.

narrator and minor characters establishes a normative standard against which Lucan's audience is invited to judge the corrupt events that unfold.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the narrator's exhortations, however, characters abandon moderation for self-indulgence.<sup>5</sup> Greed, luxury, and commodification abound, and Roman decline appears inevitable.<sup>6</sup> So much is clear, but Lucan's decided emphasis on venality, seen at the end of his exposition of the causes of the war, deserves further consideration:

hinc rapti fasces pretio sectorque fauoris  
 ipse sui populus letalisque ambitus urbi  
 annua uenali referens certamina Campo;  
 hinc usura uorax audidumque in tempora fenus  
 et concussa fides et multis utile bellum.  
 —(1.178–82)

Hence the Rods of office seized by bribery, the people  
 selling its own votes, corruption bringing death to Rome,  
 repeating annual contests on the mercenary Campus;  
 hence ravenous money-lending, interest greedy for its appointed time,  
 and credit shaken and war advantageous to many.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Civil War*, venality and the corruption it produces are key to the failure of the Republican socioeconomic system. Lucan himself offers a two-part analysis of the origins of civil war, beginning with the leaders' motives before turning to the broader societal causes (*hae ducibus causae; suberant sed publica belli/semina*, 1.158–59). In the two chapters of this section, I take up Lucan's topics in reverse order, providing an overview of economic morality in the poem before addressing the three central characters, Caesar, Pompey, and Cato.

Lucan's uncle Seneca is the key witness to the economic values of the day. As discussed in the introduction, Seneca's work testifies to an over-

4. Among those who emphasize the position of the narrator are Henderson 1987, Masters 1992, Masters 1994, and Bartsch 1997, 8. Those who see the poem as a document of real political engagement and protest include Ahl 1976 and Narducci 2002. Johnson 1987 and Sklenár 2003 see the poem as largely nihilistic. For an overview of critical camps to the time of her writing, which still persist, see Bartsch 1997, 5–7.

5. Berti 2004, 125.

6. Berti 2004. Cf. Ahl 1976, 88–126, who, like Berti, compares Lucan's morality to that of Sallust.

7. Text follows Shackleton Bailey's 1988 Teubner edition, with some minor deviations. Translations from Braund's 1992 Oxford edition.

all continuity of socioeconomic ideology from Republic to Principate, but reflects a heightened tension between traditional reciprocity and the commodity practices and habits of thought advanced through the increasing influence of those who earned their wealth. Just as Lucan creates in his figure of Cato an extreme version of Seneca's Stoicism, he likewise translates Seneca's concern for the encroachment of commodity habits into a picture of wholesale corruption.<sup>8</sup>

Lucan creates this image in part through his choice of a contemporary setting. Whereas Vergil limits explicit mention of Roman political corruption to the circumscribed context of the underworld, Lucan treats the bribery of Curio and others as part of his main narrative. He does not introduce commodity exchange simply to lend realism to his historical epic, however. Indeed, the *Civil War* lacks any transaction that even approaches the apparent ordinariness of Dido's land purchase. Seneca's writings demonstrate that every reciprocal engagement can be uncharitably interpreted as a commodity transaction; Lucan adopts this shift of perspective wholesale. All reciprocal practices are corrupted into commodity exchange, and commodity transactions themselves become thoroughly venal.

This totalizing view means that Lucan employs economic language in a distinctly different way from Vergil. As we have seen, Vergil uses commodity terms as live metaphor: thus Juno's language creates a close analogy between her drive for status and the self-seeking mercantile behavior elite Romans perceived around them. Lucan collapses the space between the tenor and vehicle almost completely. Characters do not engage in something like mercantile behavior, but in actual mercantile behavior that becomes the norm while remaining corrupt.

### *Publica semina: Perverted Reciprocity*

Vergil offers competing visions of successful and failed social order both within the temporal frame of the *Aeneid* (e.g., the kingships of Jupiter, Aeneas, and Latinus) and beyond it (the reign of Augustus). Lucan focuses exclusively on civil war, employing socioeconomic language to examine and represent the causes of internecine strife. One of Lucan's characteristic tropes is negative enumeration: rather than a traditional epic list of ships or heroes, he presents a catalog of things that did *not* occur or exist.<sup>9</sup> Be-

8. Nor were contemporary examples lacking, such as the ruinous greed of revenue collectors, which prompted strict new regulations from Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 13.50–51).

9. On this technique, see Esposito 2004.

fore examining the copious forms of commodity exchange that contribute to the war, I begin in Lucanian fashion by enumerating those reciprocal behaviors that his audience would have expected to find in a heroic epic but are in fact missing.

Unlike Vergil's Aeneas, none of Lucan's characters consistently cultivates reciprocal ties. This circumstance may be partly determined by his choice to compose historical epic. Indeed, to a certain extent Lucan's treatment of reciprocity resembles that in Caesar's own account of the civil war, one of Lucan's sources. In his *De Bello Ciuili*, Caesar does highlight his acts of generosity, such as his grant of *clementia* to the vanquished (e.g., 1.23) and distribution of rewards after victory (e.g., 2.21). He also complains of Roman noblemen who failed to show *gratia* toward him when they joined Pompey despite his earlier substantial benefactions (*maximiis beneficiis*, 1.23). Yet he does not show himself giving gifts to other elites, presumably because active warfare precludes such gestures.<sup>10</sup> Yet Lucan excludes even such mentions of reciprocity as Caesar does make. None of his characters shows the historical Caesar's concern for the creation and maintenance of *gratia*. Indeed, in typical fashion, Lucan's one use of the noun *gratia* parodies Caesar, who pronounces the word with heavy irony.<sup>11</sup>

The language for reciprocal values and practices that does appear indicates the absence, corruption, or failure of reciprocity. Both *pietas*, which guarantees reciprocal relations (including those with divinities), and *fides*, the trust that underlies them,<sup>12</sup> have disappeared: *pietasque fidesque/dstituunt* (5.297–98). When the Caesarian soldiers commanded by Vulteius are surrounded on their raft and decide to slaughter one another rather than be captured, the only *pietas* left to them was to kill one another quickly with one blow (*pietas ferientibus una*, 4.565). At the opening of the battle of Pharsalia, soldiers hesitate out of *pietas* (*pietate*, 7.468) toward fellow Romans on the other side but soon overcome their inhibitions.

*Fides* vanishes in all forms after the death of Julia (*fides discussa*, 1.119), including even the suspect *fides* of commercial credit (1.182, 2.253–54). Misplaced *fides* alone remains: the gods keep their *fides* only by bringing the disaster foretold in portents (2.17). Complaining of the manner of Pompey's death, the narrator bitterly addresses civil war itself, declaring

10. Caesar does refer to his "friendship" (*amicitia*, 3.60) with two Gallic allies as he tries to persuade them to stop fleecing their countrymen.

11. 4.275. See further in the following chapter.

12. On the relationship of *pietas* and *fides*, see Hellegouarc'h 1963, 276–79.

it should “keep faith” (*servate fidem*, 8.547), that is, stay true to its inter-necine nature by having a Roman soldier, rather than an Egyptian, murder the Roman general Pompey. Another Roman soldier later explains to Cato that he will not continue fighting after Pompey’s death because he was keeping “faith” (*fidem*, 9.249) with Pompey while he was alive, but now that he is dead it is a crime. This statement indicates that *fides*, like *virtus* (6.147–48), can be an offense in time of civil war. The loss of *fides* and *pietas* means a complete breakdown of the social order secured by reciprocity. The necessary consequence is the destruction of *concordia*. War becomes inevitable when the precarious peace that held prior to the demise of Crassus (*concordia discors*, 1.98) is shattered.

Among the failed forms of reciprocity, Lucan repeatedly highlights broken kinship bonds. The phrase *cognatas acies* of the poem’s opening lines (1.4) initiates a theme of civil war as self-destruction that dominates the poem. Lucan writes of the blood bond (*pignora iuncti sanguinis*, 1.111–14) between Pompey and Caesar ruptured at the death of Julia and reminds his audience some twenty-three times that the rival generals go to war as father-in-law and son-in-law.<sup>13</sup> Roman troops in Spain fraternize across the lines of their camps (4.174–98) before the Pompeian general Petreius kills some Caesarians and expels others from his camp, destroying the “bonds of peace” (*foedera pacis*, 4.205) that had been formed. The soldiers proceed to kill each other amid the tables and couches where they had just dined together (4.245–46).

The bonds between the unrelated fare still worse than those between relatives. Patronage scarcely exists, apart from scattered instances involving the poem’s central characters. Gift giving and the *gratia* it produces are marginal. Where such practices exist, they are twisted, as when in the mutual slaughter of Vulteius and his men, Vulteius kills the man who dealt him a mortal blow with his own “grateful strike” (*grato . . . ictu*, 4.547). The gods bestow meager gifts: Earth grants powers to her son Antaeus (4.598), Delphi loses the gift of prophecy (5.111–12), and mortals ignore the gifts of the gods (5.528, on the poverty of Amyclas). Even these instances of gift exchange are stillborn. The monster Antaeus who welcomes the stranger Hercules with blows cannot truly participate in civilized gift ex-

13. 1.98–120, 2.595, 2.652, 5.473, 6.5, 6.305, 7.71, 7.334, 7.352, 7.380, 7.674, 7.723, 7.806, 8.629, 8.795, 9.210, 9.1015, 9.1026, 9.1048–49, 9.1055, 9.1058, 9.1094, 10.184. Armisen-Marchetti 2003, 250, notes the repetition of *socer* and *gener* despite the fact that the poem starts five years after the death of Julia, Caesar’s daughter and Pompey’s wife. In the *Aeneid*, Vergil refers to the same sad irony, though far less often, as in Anchises’ foretelling of the conflict between Caesar and Pompey at 6.830–31.

change. The withdrawal of prophecy from Delphi is a gift offering in reverse. And the divine gifts given to Amyclas and others cannot function if they are not perceived and accepted by the receiver.

Lucan's mention of gifts only calls attention to their absence, as does his repeated and exclusive use of the verb *donare* to mean "concede." When the opposing forces in Spain hesitate to begin fighting, they "grant one day of peace to their country and the laws they had broken" (*patriaeque et ruptis legibus unum/donauere diem*, 4.27–28). By unwisely urging their horses on against Juba's ambush, Curio's cavalry only "offer [to their enemies] the gift of shorter javelin casts and easier wounding" (*spatium iaculis oblato uolnere donat*, 4.764). And the narrator later tells us that we should pardon Antony for loving Cleopatra when even Caesar fell under her spell (*quis . . . ueniam non donet?*, 10.70).<sup>14</sup> Other Roman authors employ the word *donare* to mean "to concede" rather than "to give a gift."<sup>15</sup> Yet Lucan's repeated use of the former meaning, when set against the lack of ordinary gift transactions, constitutes a small program of replacing the ideal of generous and voluntary giving with the notion of an occasional grudging tolerance.

The few instances of *hospitium* in the poem show it faring no better than gift exchange. The legendary Hercules was, like Theseus, an archetypal guest whose hosts were to be judged by their adherence to standards of *xenia/hospitium*. Lucan calls Hercules a *hospes* in two encounters where his hosts violently defy these standards. Antaeus offers the stranger (*hospes*, 4.614) Hercules a deadly challenge rather than a proper welcome. When Hercules is a guest of the centaur Pholos (6.391), he disobeys his host by opening a cask of wine and attracting other belligerent centaurs. In the ensuing melee Pholos is wounded and Hercules' mentor, Chiron, is killed.<sup>16</sup> Lucan presents just one successful act of *hospitium*. The Psylli, an African tribe immune to snakebite, offer their healing services to travelers (*excubat hospitibus*, 9.910–11) and so help the soldiers of Cato, who are bedeviled by snakes and their poisons. Lucan's removal of true *hospitium* to the margins of the Roman Empire makes it much like the practice of *libertas*, which, the narrator complains, lives on only among the Germans and Scythians (7.433–36): both virtues are now practiced by foreigners rather than Romans. Likewise, no character shows true generosity in forgiving others. Apart from Caesar, considered in the next chapter, only Vulteius

14. Further instances are at 4.385, 8.815, 9.144, 9.1017.

15. OLD, s.v. *dono*, 4.

16. [Apollodorus] *Bibl.* 2.5.4.

speaks of pardon (*ueniam*, 4.510), wishing that the enemy would promise mercy so that he and his men can spurn it and instead kill one another in mutual suicide.

Just as Lucan projects unalloyed virtues onto the foreign Psylli, he makes another African nation representative of pure vice. The Egyptian minister Pothinus persuades the young Ptolemy to assassinate Pompey and later leads the battle against Caesar at Alexandria. By openly advocating the exploitation of reciprocal relations and the reduction of all deliberation to self-serving calculation, Pothinus stands at one extreme of the spectrum of socioeconomic relations. In his attempt to persuade Ptolemy to murder Pompey, Pothinus tells him that *fides* should be abandoned because loyalty brings only punishment to the victims of fortune (8.485–86). He declares that expediency stands as far apart from justice as the stars from the earth or fire from water (*sidera terra/ut distant et flamma mari, sic utile recto*, 8.487–88) and that he who would practice *pietas* (*esse pius*, 8.494) must quit the royal court. Pothinus counsels Ptolemy against letting his “guest-friend” (*hospes*, 8.498) Pompey assume the throne of Egypt,<sup>17</sup> and he closes by admonishing Ptolemy that no *fides* was owed to misfortunate friends (8.535). When he contrasts the expedient (*utile*) and the just (*rectum*), Pothinus implicitly disputes Cicero’s contention in *On Duties* that the two are identical.

Because Pothinus is fully committed to the sort of mercantile calculation that incites the civil war (his word *utile* echoes the phrase *multis utile bellum*, 1.182), he naturally proves inept at reciprocal affairs. Pothinus tells Ptolemy that he should not sleep while Egypt is being “given away as a gift” from Caesar to Cleopatra (*nec prodita tantum est/sed donata Pharos*, 10.355–56). He warns Ptolemy that Cleopatra will “give” their lives away “as gifts for a few kisses” (*meque tuumque caput per singula forsitan illi/oscula donabit*, 10.365). Despite his wariness, Pothinus inadvertently gives Caesar the “gift” of a night’s respite (*donata est nox una duci*, 10.432–33) by failing to kill him at the first opportunity. And rather than give gifts that might have mollified Caesar, Pothinus can only speak in vain of Caesar’s head as “owed” to the world (*quod debetur adhuc mundo caput*, 10.393).

Pothinus is the most extreme violator of reciprocal norms and advocate of mercantile calculation in the poem. He enters the poem late and

17. Pompey had taken steps at Rome to preserve Egypt for Ptolemy’s father. Lentulus counsels Pompey to seek the support of Egypt because Ptolemy “owed his kingdom” to him (*sceptra . . . habet tibi debita*, 8.448).



contributes to an atmosphere of self-centered indulgence at the Egyptian court. But his behavior also illustrates that the utter rejection of reciprocity and pursuit of pure self-interest leads quickly to political implosion and personal destruction. The poem's three major characters may each fail in his own way, but each at least adopts a strategy of socioeconomic behavior that protects his political and personal fortunes from instant collapse.

### *Missing Gods*

The absence and perversion of reciprocal relations could not arise if benign divinities oversaw human affairs, but the traditional gods of epic are absent from Lucan's epic.<sup>18</sup> No Olympian deities appear in the narrative to receive sacrifices, praise mortals for gifts they have given, or act upon long-standing reciprocal ties. Mortals either conduct sacrifices that go awry or forgo altogether attempts to communicate with the gods. The divinatory sacrifice of the Etruscan seer Arruns is foul and foreboding (1.605–38), and a maenad inspired by Phoebus foretells the course of the war to come (1.673–95). Supernatural forces have the power to predict disaster,<sup>19</sup> but these prophecies are isolated emanations from a remote sphere. When Appius sets out to learn his fate from the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, the narrator tells us that no one makes prayers there, because the god has forbidden them; Apollo only pronounces immutable facts.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Aeneas before the Sybil, Appius commands the priestess to perform her duty without offering the usual prayers, vows, or gifts (5.120–97). After the Romans hear the dire prophecies of Book 1, matrons crowd the temples in good epic fashion, but in contrast to the Trojan women of the *Aeneid*,<sup>21</sup> they offer no gifts to the gods for their salvation, only complaints (*querellas*, 2.63). The Pompeian forces in Spain freed by Caesar regret that they ever “prayed in

18. See further discussion at Feeney 1991, 250–301. He discusses the absence of divine providence on p. 284, for which the most relevant passage is the narrator's declaration before the battle of Pharsalia that “we truly have no gods: since history is borne along by blind chance, we lie when we say that Jupiter reigns” (*sunt nobis nulla profecto/numina: cum caeco rapiantur saecula casu,/mentimur regnare Iouem*, 7.445–47).

19. So too, with the prophecy of Phemonoe, the priestess at Delphi, to Appius at 5.194–96.

20. *haud illic tacito mala uota susurro/concipiunt, nam fixa canens mutandaque nulli/mortales optare uetat*, 5.104–6. The Massilians, negotiating with Caesar to remain neutral in the conflict, give voice to a similar idea in an argument by analogy. They say that if Jupiter were fighting with the giants, the *pietas* of mortals would refrain from offering prayers but rather await the outcome (3.315–20). This is the situation of lesser mortals throughout the whole poem.

21. The Trojan women offer Pallas a robe in an attempt to save their city (*peplumque ferebant/suppliciter*, 1.480–81).

vain to the gods for a favorable outcome in war" (*frustra que rogasse/prospera bella deos*, 4.387–88). The narrator says that Romans will have their revenge upon gods because after Pharsalia the Romans will swear by the ghosts of dead Roman emperors in the gods' temples (7.455–59). Mortals cannot engage in reciprocity to influence the major divinities, and lesser gods, such as *Pietas* and *Fides*, who guaranteed reciprocal relations, have disappeared.<sup>22</sup>

The one figure who does maintain efficacious relationships with supernatural powers is the witch *Erichtho*. Pompey's son *Sextus* seeks her out to learn about his fate because the celestial gods know nothing useful (*scire parum superos*, 6.434). *Erichtho* enacts a dark parody of proper reciprocal behavior: she pours out poison "generously" (*large*, 6.669), sacrifices human infants rather than animals (6.710–11), and unjustly deprives a re-animated corpse of death's last "gift" (*munus*, 6.724), the privilege of not dying a second time. She mixes such distorted reciprocity unwholesomely with commodity behaviors, offering a "payment" (*mercede*, 6.763) to the same soul from which she had snatched death's gift.

Apart from these perversions, *Erichtho* abandons even the forms of true reciprocity. She certainly does not pray to the celestial gods (*non superos orat, nec cantu supplice numen/auxiliare uocat*, 6.523). But when she invokes underworld divinities (*precantis*, 6.527), she neither calls upon any relationship or even offers them rewards. Instead, the chthonic powers respond immediately out of fear, afraid to hear a second spell (*carmenque timent audire secundum*, 6.528). *Erichtho* compels rather than asks, as when she openly threatens the underworld powers that, if they do not obey her, she will force an unnamed demiurge to punish them (*an ille/compellandus erit?*, 6.744–45).

In this way, *Erichtho* effectively answers the narrator's earlier questions regarding how she and other Thessalian witches exercise their power:

quis labor hic superis cantus herbasque sequendi  
spernendique timor? cuius commercia pacti  
obstrictos habuere deos? parere necesse est,

22. Other instances of mislaid interactions with the gods include the issuance of "new prayers" (*noua uota*, 5.450) by Caesar's becalmed sailors for stormy seas and violent winds. The prayers are new in that the sailors ask the gods to produce rather than dispel storms. But the prayers must also be new because the gods are not listening to the old ones. At 4.788–92, the narrator is willing to allow that the death of *Curio's* men at the hands of *Juba* is an "expiation" (*piacula*) for the *manes* of *Hannibal* and the *Carthaginians*, but he objects that these Roman deaths should help Pompey and the Senate, not Africans.

an iuuat? ignota tantum pietate merentur,  
 an tacitis ualuere minis? hoc iuris in omnis  
 est illis superos, an habent haec carmina certum  
 imperiosa deum, qui mundum cogere quidquid  
 cogitur ipse potest?

—(6.492–99)

Why do the gods take the trouble to obey the spells and drugs,  
 not daring to despise them? What kind of link  
 holds the gods bound fast? Is their obedience necessary  
 or by choice? Do the witches win so much merit by loyalty unknown  
 or do they prevail by secret threats? Do they have this power  
 over all the gods, or have these spells authority  
 over one particular deity, who can force the universe to do  
 whatever he himself is forced to do?

Among these possibilities, Erictho clearly does not have a relationship of *pietas* with the gods, nor even a commodity-form agreement (*commercii pacti*); she but simply uses force. Together with Erictho's actions, these questions amount to a deconstruction of Roman elite norms, one that we find throughout the poem: reciprocal exchanges stemming from *pietas* yield to commodity arrangements, which are then themselves revealed as nothing more than compulsion.

### Commodity Exchange

The poem's relative scarcity of reciprocal exchange, even in its distorted forms, is balanced by a corresponding abundance of commodity exchange. To take just one index, Lucan uses the word *merces* twenty-two times in comparison to Vergil's three.<sup>23</sup> Commodity language is implicated in three factors leading to the civil war: greed, the commodity exchange mode itself, and wasteful luxury. Lucan blends these factors together in his opening statement on the causes of the war because they are causally related: greed, the excessive desire for goods, gives rise to commodity thinking, which in turn leads to the wasteful overconsumption of luxury. But the poet also treats these factors as conceptually distinct, highlighting the pernicious force of each at different times.

23. *Aeneid*: 1.367, 2.104, 7.317. *Bellum Ciuile*: 1.38, 1.340, 2.227, 2.255, 2.330, 2.655, 4.220, 5.286, 5.331, 6.763, 7.303, 7.610, 7.738, 7.751, 8.10, 8.446, 8.854, 9.151, 9.280, 9.707, 9.1101, 10.408.

Lucan issues one of his more explicit condemnations of greed as Caesar raids the Roman treasury:

pugnaxque Metellus,  
 ut uidet ingenti Saturnia templa reuelli  
 mole, rapit gressus et Caesaris agmina rumpens  
 ante fores nondum reseratae constitit aedis  
 (usque adeo solus ferrum mortemque timere  
 auri nescit amor; pereunt discrimine nullo  
 amissae leges sed, pars uilissima rerum,  
 certamen mouistis, opes).  
 —(3.114–21)

When aggressive Metellus  
 sees Saturn's temple being torn apart by huge  
 exertion, with rapid step he breaks through Caesar's lines  
 and stands before the doors of the temple, not yet opened.  
 To this extent the love of gold alone knows  
 no fear of sword or death: the laws are lost and perish  
 with no crisis, but you, wealth, the cheapest part of life,  
 you provoked a fight.

Metellus rightly defends the treasury, but for the wrong reason: greed takes the place of virtue and the measured order of law. Avarice infects the lowest levels of society no less than the highest. The narrator interrupts an account of the famine suffered by Caesar's soldiers in Spain to decry a greed more powerful than hunger itself, one that drives starving soldiers to sell their food for gold:

toto censu non prodigus emit  
 exiguum Cererem. pro lucri pallida tabes!  
 non dest prolato ieiunus uenditor auro.  
 —(4.95–97)

Though no lavish spender, he gives his entire fortune  
 to buy a little bread. How terrible is the pallid corruption of greed!  
 When gold is offered there is no shortage of hungry sellers.

While the protest against Metellus's greed recalls a similar exclamation by the narrator of the *Aeneid* (*auri sacra fames*, 3.57), the complaint

of this second passage is more prosaic than anything in Vergil's epic and confirms that greed is pervasive in society at large, not just among the potentates.

Lucan punctuates his catalog of the causes the war by ending with the mercantile motivations that are most base and corrupting (*usura uorax . . . fenus*, 1.181). He writes similarly of Curio, the most venal figure in the poem:

haud alium tanta ciuem tulit indole Roma  
aut cui plus leges deberent recta sequenti;  
perdita nunc urbi nocuerunt saecula, postquam  
ambitus et luxus et opum metuenda facultas  
transuerso mentem dubiam torrente tulerunt,  
momentumque fuit mutatus Curio rerum  
Gallorum captus spoliis et Caesaris auro.  
ius licet in iugulos nostros sibi fecerit ensis  
Sulla potens Mariusque ferox et Cinna cruentus  
Caesareaeque domus series, cui tanta potestas  
concessa est? emere omnes, hic uendidit urbem.  
—(4.814–24)

No other citizen of such great talent did Rome produce,  
to no other did the laws owe more had he followed what was right.  
Depraved ages now damaged Rome, once  
ambition, luxury, and the dreaded power of wealth  
had carried off his wavering mind with sideways current;  
and won over by Gallic booty and Caesar's gold,  
the altered Curio turned the balance of events.  
True, mighty Sulla and fierce Marius and bloody Cinna  
and the chain of Caesar's house created for themselves  
the power of the sword over our throats. But who was ever granted  
such great power as he? They all bought, but he sold Rome.

Ambition and luxury are bad enough, but commerce at the expense of the community is an even greater offense, used for rhetorical climax. And Curio excels other profiteers: Sulla, Marius, Cinna, and the Caesars at least paid to acquire Rome, whereas Curio trades the capital of the world for lucre.

Lucan represents money, the emblematic means of commodity exchange, as an independent cause of strife. This thought comes in a digression on the origins of coinage in Thessaly, where Sextus goes to see Erictho:

primus Thessalicae rector telluris Ionos  
 in formam calidae percussit pondera massae  
 fudit et argentum flammis aurumque moneta  
 fregit et immensis coxit fornacibus aera.  
 illic, quod populos scelerata impedit in arma,  
 diuitias numerare datum est.

—(6.402–7)

Ionos, ruler of the Thessalian land, was the first  
 to beat the lumps of heated ore into shape,  
 melt silver in the flames and strike gold  
 with a stamp and in vast furnaces to smelt copper.  
 There to count one's wealth became possible, and this drove  
 the people into wicked warfare.

Why should the ability to count one's wealth, rather than desire for it,  
 be the cause of warfare? Because the invention of coinage, along with the  
 precise measurement of wealth it allows, enables and encourages a more  
 vigorous pursuit of individual interests at the expense of the community.<sup>24</sup>  
 At the most brutal level, men commit violence for money. Sulla's follow-  
 ers murder for *praemia* (2.148–51), and when Brutus tells Cato that the sol-  
 diers on both sides fight only for their own profit (*mercede*, 2.255), the nar-  
 rator later seconds his observation:<sup>25</sup>

nulla fides pietasque uiris qui castra secuntur,  
 uenalesque manus; ibi fas ubi proxima merces.

—(10.407–8)

24. Cf. *diri mala semina belli*, 3.150, and Kurke 1999, 73: "The lineaments of Greek aris-  
 tocratic ideology, which valorizes gift exchange between households and reduces the public  
 sphere, the domain of money, to shopkeeping . . . makes coinage simply an instrument of trade  
 and the triumph of the short-term transactional order." Lucan's remarks on the invention of  
 coinage recall similar observations by Lucretius (5.1105–35), but where Lucretius speaks of the  
 corruption caused by gold, Lucan emphasizes coinage itself. In what may be a rewriting of  
 Lucan's *Civil War*, Petronius takes up and amplifies Lucan's lament for the ruined socioeco-  
 nomic values of Rome, also emphasizing the corrupting effects of money. In section 119, Pet-  
 ronius's character Eumolpus recounts a war that was motivated by wealth and gluttony (4–6,  
 33), the selling of delicacies as a sign of decay (35), the buying of the Roman masses (*emptique*  
*Quirites*, 39; cf. Luc. 1.314, *emptique clientes*), the selling of votes (*lucri suffragia uertunt*, 40),  
 a price on everything (*uenalis populus, uenalis curia partum, / est fauor pretio*, 41–42), great-  
 ness corrupted by gold (44), and the destructive power of usury (*faenoris ingluuies*, 52).

25. He similarly condemns Romans for buying and selling snake poisons (9.706–7). The  
 simultaneous censure of murderousness and mercantile trade suggests that one is not far from  
 the other, as Cato the Elder also implies in the passage quoted in the introduction.

No loyalty, no duty have the men who follow camp, and their hands are up for sale; there lies right—where pay is nearest.

*Pietas* and *fides* have perished generally, but the loss is perhaps most evident among the Roman soldiery. Indeed, even the *fides* that guarantees commodity dealings no longer holds back war (*concussa fides*, 1.182; *permiscenda fides*, 2.253–54).

When trade corrupts, one must seek security in poverty (5.523–27, 8.238–43), particularly in regions where gold and coins have not yet penetrated. Thus Lucan describes fertile western Africa as a land without smelted copper or gold (*non aere neque auro/excoquitur*, 9.424–25), whose inhabitants dwell peaceably and contentedly in the shade of their citrus trees (9.428). The precincts of Jupiter Ammon's temple remain holy because they have not yet seen Roman gold (*numen Romano templum defendit auro*, 9.521). Just as only the African Psylli observe true *hospitium*, only Africans evade the corruption of trade through money.

As these examples show, noxious commodity exchange is the norm for social interaction in Lucan's epic. Yet the poet also makes this very norm an object of irony. In an episode touched upon briefly above, Petreius, the Pompeian commander in Spain, appears to champion traditional Roman economic values when he expels the Caesarian soldiers fraternizing with his own men. He protests that his forces are "selling out" (*tradita uenum*, 4.206) by consorting with their enemies and tells his men that their lives shall never be the "price and wages" (*pretium mercesque*, 4.220) of (i.e., reward for) treason. No one should sell his freedom for peace (*si bene libertas umquam pro pace daretur*, 4.227), and the willingness of his men to do so means that their loyalty (*fides*, 4.230) is cheaper (*uilius*, 4.229) than that of the Caesarians. Petreius frames his reprimand in good aristocratic terms that condemn involvement in commodity exchange harmful to the community. The irony arises from his effort to uphold these norms during a civil war. By enjoining cohesion upon his own forces, he prevents the reunion of Roman relatives and friends across battle lines, which could lead to a greater reconciliation. His rejection of mercantile thinking thus leads paradoxically to the mutual slaughter of relatives and friends over the tables where they had just eaten, drunk, and renewed their social bonds (4.245–46).

The corruption of commodity exchange spreads beyond the temporal frame of the poem into the political conditions of Lucan's own day, as we see in the opening dedication to Nero (1.33–66). Scholars disagree as to

whether this passage is subversively critical of the *princeps*.<sup>26</sup> Yet at two moments in the dedication economic language does cast Nero in an unflattering light. Lucan says that mortals embrace the crimes and blasphemies the gods visit upon mortals during civil war if they come with the “reward” of Nero: *scelera ista nefasque/hac mercede placent*, 1.37–38. Vergil’s Juno uses the same language when she too looks forward to the costs of a civil war, summoning Allecto and anticipating the price to be paid before Aeneas and Latinus are united (*mercede*, 7.317). As Leigh observes,

lines 43–4 . . . (*multum Roma tamen debet ciuilibus armis/quod tibi res acta est*) again demand calculation of profit and loss. All this is troubling. True, a dedication should be flattering and there would be nothing more flattering than sincerely to imply that Nero was worth the price paid, but it remains the case that the rest of the poem is studied with allusions to the destruction of Italy and is markedly free from attestations of the nation’s rebirth under Nero. While the loss is ever visible, the profit is not there to be found.<sup>27</sup>

We can add to this list the narrator’s description of Nero’s reign being “bought for a great price” (*magnoque . . . parantur*, 1.34).

Consideration of the larger role of commodity exchange in the poem shows that not only do the losses of the civil war seem to vastly outweigh the gain of Nero as *princeps* in the course of the poem, but even at a first reading this portrayal of Nero diminishes his stature as a noble Roman by association with morally suspect commodity exchange. Furthermore, the description of Nero as a “reward” becomes increasingly ironic as we proceed, for nearly any such reward gained in the poem is illegitimate and results from a noxious exchange process. In retrospect, then, the economic language of Lucan’s dedication presents Nero as an oddly passive product of the shortsighted and self-interested striving that leads to civil war.

### *Waste and Luxury*

Roman economic moralizing often calls attention to the irony that careful calculation of individual advantage creates tremendous waste for the

26. Dewar 1994 contends that the putative parody of Nero’s physical characteristics does not match his physiognomy as reported by other sources and points out that fulsome praise of the *princeps* in Lucan’s day was not uncommon and so by no means necessarily insincere.

27. Leigh 1997, 25.



community: the merchant and the prodigal are often one and the same. In the *Civil War*, Lucan suggests not only that the mercantile drive for war squanders resources, but that waste itself, often in the form of *luxuria*, is another cause of strife.<sup>28</sup> The narrator voices his most explicit condemnation of *luxuria* after describing the relief of Pompeian soldiers at receiving water they had been deprived of by Caesar's siege:

o prodiga rerum  
luxuries numquam paruo contenta paratis  
et quaesitorum terra pelagoque ciborum  
ambitiosa fames et laetae gloria mensae,  
discite quam paruo liceat producere uitam  
et quantum natura petat.  
—(4.373–78)

O luxury  
extravagant of resources, never content with what costs little,  
and ostentatious hunger for foods sought  
by land and sea, and pride in a lavish table:  
learn how life can be prolonged at tiny cost  
and how little nature asks.

The narrator elsewhere tells us that the desire for luxury afflicts Romans particularly (9.429–30) and sows civil conflict among them (1.162). But the individual pleasures to be had in war must be paid for by the waste of the lives, bodies, and goods of others and of the community as a whole. Thus a starving soldier is forced to become “prodigal” (*prodigus*, 4.95) by spending all of his money for a bit of bread, an act that would be anything but prodigal at normal prices in peacetime.

Romans do not just waste ordinary material goods, but also blood and bodies, as the narrator announces in the poem's opening lines:

heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari<sup>29</sup>  
hoc quem ciuiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae,  
unde uenit Titan et Nox ubi sidera condit  
quaque dies medius flagrantibus aestuat horis

28. See further Berti 2004, 125.

29. Getty 1940 ad 1.13 observes that “*parari* = *comparari* (‘to be bought’), simple for compound verb.”

et qua bruma rigens ac nescia uere remitti  
 astringit Scythicum glaciali frigore pontum!  
 —(1.13–18)

A bitter thought—how much of earth and sea might have been bought  
 with this blood shed by the hands of fellow citizens:  
 where Titan rises, where Night conceals the star,  
 where midday blazes with its scorching regions,  
 where winter, stiff and never eased by spring,  
 binds the Scythian Pontus with icy chill!

Plutarch writes that just before the battle of Pharsalia, some Romans and Greeks reflected that the opposed sides might rather have put their combined energies into the subjugation of Parthia and India, where the pretext of bringing civilization would justify Roman greed (*pleonexia*).<sup>30</sup> Lucan's narrator declares in similar terms that Roman blood should be exchanged for foreign land rather than squandered in civil war. The narrator's embrace of such commodity calculation in lives, even for a patriotic cause, must have come as a mild shock to the poem's audience. The sentiment not only violates the notion, common among Romans, that their empire arose from honorable defensive actions.<sup>31</sup> It also casts Romans as traffickers in their own blood and lives.

This surprise introduces Lucan's audience abruptly to the view of the war he will offer. Human lives are squandered on vast scale throughout the poem, with torrents of blood from the bodies of wounded soldiers,<sup>32</sup> ships riding low under the weight of carnage,<sup>33</sup> and massive piles of corpses.<sup>34</sup> This waste results from the mercantile causes of the war and the dispositions of many who participate in it, however many false reciprocal gestures they may make. In a grim echo of the narrator's preference that human bodies be traded like commodities rather than purely wasted, one observer later comments that men who mutilated a political opponent beyond recognition before killing him "lost their profit" (*perdere fructum*,

30. *Pomp.* 70, a parallel cited by Getty 1940 ad 1.13.

31. On defensive actions, Cic. *Rep.* 3.23.35 writes that "our people took control of the whole world by defending our allies" (*noster autem populus sociis defendendis terrarum iam omnium potitus est*). Cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.11.34–38, discussed along with similar sentiments from Livy by Burck 1982, 1150–51. Modern historians have debated the validity of this claim. See, e.g., Mattern 1999. Seneca criticizes honor as a *gloriosum scelus*, *Ep.* 95.30.

32. 3.583–91, 3.638–39, 7.625.

33. 3.626–27.

34. 2.111; 2.135; *cumulo crescente*, 6.180.

2.190), since they could have sold a recognizable corpse to Sulla. The vices of commodity exchange and waste on a grand scale will dominate the narrative.

The narrator's advocacy of trade in lives not only introduces the poem's audience abruptly to a vision of Rome undone by commodification; it also signals Lucan's preferred response to this crisis. Seneca could not analyze reciprocal practices without weighing their costs and benefits in commodity terms. The narrator of the *Civil War* likewise criticizes destructive trade but at other points detaches commodity language from mercantile *incontinentia* for use in quantifying the waste of civil war. Because commodity terms clarify the subjectivity of reciprocal behavior, they can be used to ascertain when and how reciprocity has become corrupt and to redefine virtuous socioeconomic behavior. The narrator declares that he is ashamed to spend tears on countless individual deaths at Pharsalia when the whole world is perishing: *impendisse pudet lacrimas in funere mundi/mortibus innumeris*, 7.617–18. This is a small, sad gesture of frugality amid massive devastation, but the narrator is reflecting, in suitably muted fashion, the only path forward offered by his narrative. When the generous man is a fraud and the merchant ascendant, Lucan's thought turns to the archetypal frugal Roman, Cato, as the last hope for recovering social order.



## CHAPTER FOUR

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# Caesar, Pompey, and Cato

## Caesar

In the *Civil War*, Lucan strips Caesar of much of his real-life complexity. Gone are his charm, his erudition, and his philosophy. Caesar remains fascinating, however, for his consummate boldness and skill in the pursuit of power, regardless of the cost for others.<sup>1</sup> But there is some debate over the particular configuration of Caesar's "demonic megalomania."<sup>2</sup> Some have seen Lucan's Caesar as the very type of the tyrant, familiar from tragedy and declamation:<sup>3</sup> he remains distant from the rest of humanity, rejects the norms of social life, and exhibits a rash courage bordering on ferocity.<sup>4</sup> Yet Caesar lacks the tyrant's typical sense of personal inadequacy, vengefulness, treachery, and obsessive fear, exposing himself instead to various dangers.<sup>5</sup> In short, Caesar has a tyrant's lust for power but without the constraint of fear.<sup>6</sup> This would seem to make him a creature of blind

1. Narducci 2002, 188: "Nella *Pharsalia*, Cesare conquista una sua malefica grandezza, asurgendo a vera e propria incarnazione del *furor* che la Fortuna scatena contro l'antica potenza di Roma." Johnson 1987, 101–34, is a good meditation on the basic character of Lucan's Caesar. The case Leigh 1999 makes for redeeming qualities in Caesar amounts to only a modest qualification. Sklenár 2003, 141 n. 58, misreads Masters 1992, 82, when he accuses him of "indenturing [Lucan] to Caesar." Masters does not seek to exculpate Caesar, but rather argues that Lucan's narrator sympathizes alternately with Pompey and Caesar, despite the shortcomings of each: "Lucan is Caesarian in his ambition, but Pompeian in his remorse; the Pompeian in him condemns Caesar, but the Caesarian in him condemns—kills—Pompey" (Masters 1992, 10).

2. The phrase of Ahl 1976, 228.

3. Beginning at least with Syndikus 1958, 95.

4. Narducci 2002, 240–47.

5. Ahl 1976, 229 with n. 21.

6. Exceptionally, Caesar experiences nightmares after the battle of Pharsalia (7.776), but they scarcely slow his course.

fury,<sup>7</sup> like the lightning bolt to which Lucan compares him at the opening of the poem (1.151–57), to the point that some have taken rage to be an end in itself for Caesar.<sup>8</sup> But power and destruction are Caesar's overarching goals,<sup>9</sup> especially as the infliction of destruction confirms his sense of power.<sup>10</sup> Although Caesar may not respond to external checks on his actions, he does control and channel his wrath toward his goal of domination. Acts such as the destruction of Massilia en route to Spain seem gratuitous,<sup>11</sup> but even here Caesar intends to set an example for those who would challenge him.<sup>12</sup>

In order to represent Caesar's exercise of self-control toward malign ends, Lucan frequently employs the language of commerce. He applies the most basic verb for buying, *emo*, only to Caesar and his allies, seven times in fact. In one instance, although Caesar cannot tolerate a delay in his continuous war, even a delay brought about by victory,<sup>13</sup> he pauses at Rome to win over the populace with food, knowing that "fear of a leader is bought when the powerful feed the sluggish masses" (*emiturque metus cum segne potentes/uolgus alunt*, 3.57–58).<sup>14</sup>

Just as Caesar does not completely fit the mold of the tyrant, however, he also lacks the full complement of mercantile characteristics. Though he conceals his motives at times, Caesar does not bother with cunning because he believes himself to be without equals. In this way he fully represents the disordered world he strives to dominate, where the raw self-interest of the merchant is patent and ubiquitous: he may be motivated by a desire for supremacy (*inpatiens . . . loci fortuna secundi*, 1.124), but in method he does not differ from the war profiteers, for whom war is *utile* (1.178–82).<sup>15</sup>

7. Narducci 2002, 188, 190, 193.

8. "L'ira di Cesare è un mezzo per realizzare ambizioni di potenza e di distruzione; ma è anche fine a se stessa: una passione disumana, che ha tutto l'aspetto della gratuità, una spinta irrefrenabile ad annientare quanto tenti di opporre resistenza" (Narducci 2002, 193).

9. Narducci 2002, 193: "ambizioni di potenza e di distruzione."

10. Johnson 1987, 107–17.

11. Narducci 2002, 193.

12. He says *nihil esse meo discetis tutius aevo/quam duce me bellum*, 3.371–72.

13. *neque enim iam sufficit ulla/praecipiti fortuna uiro, nec uincere tanti, ut bellum differret, erat*, 3.50–52.

14. The other instances are as follows. When Caesar calls Pompey's clients "bought" (1.314), his language reflects more on himself than Pompey. Caesar's soldier buys grain (4.95). Others bought Rome but Curio, an ally of Caesar, sells it (4.824). Caesar tells his troops that no barbarian would buy Pompey's rule at Rome at the cost of his own blood (7.282). A servant of Ptolemy speaks of buying Caesar (9.1021). Cleopatra buys peace from Caesar with her favors (10.107).

15. My reading of Caesar, and of Pompey, owes something to Roller 2001, 29–43, who points out the greater exercise of *pietas* on the side of the Pompeians. Roller argues that the Pompeians tend to take the view that their opponents are (a rebellious) part of their commu-

*Caesar's De Bello Ciuili*

Scholars have established that Lucan's epic is "antiphrastic" not only to the *Aeneid*,<sup>16</sup> but also to Caesar's own history of the civil war.<sup>17</sup> By beginning with Caesar's account, we will gain a basis for judging how great a reversal of Caesar's own self-presentation Lucan enacts with his mercantile portrait.

Caesar presents himself as deeply concerned during the civil war to defend and practice the proprieties of reciprocal exchange. This choice forms part of an explicit strategy for victory: in a separate letter preserved among Cicero's correspondence, Caesar writes that "this will be our novel victory strategy, to triumph through compassion and generosity" (*haec noua sit ratio uincendi ut misericordia et liberalitate nos muniamus*).<sup>18</sup> When, at the outset of the war, Caesar captures the enemy general Domitius and his other Roman noblemen at Corfinium, he complains of their lack of gratitude (*gratia*) for his previous extraordinary services to them (*maximis beneficiis*), yet dismisses them unharmed (1.23). Caesar is careful to state that he restores Domitius's money to him, although it really belonged to the Roman treasury. This way he will not seem to have been more restrained (*continentior*) with the lives of the men he released than with their money (*pecunia*, 1.23), but equally generous with both.<sup>19</sup> Back at Rome, Caesar carefully balances reciprocal priorities in settling affairs before proceeding to pursue Pompey. He has the popular assembly restore rights to those of his allies who were convicted of bribery in sham trials when Pompey controlled Rome. Caesar presents his dilemma as whether he should grant these rights or have the assembly do so. He does not want

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nity, rather than seeing them as foreign enemies, as the Caesarians tend to do. Because historically Caesar and his partisans did not generally speak of their opponents this way, Lucan is imposing his harsher view upon the rhetoric of the Caesarian cause. My analysis expands upon Roller's by documenting the full range of these characters' economic behaviors to develop an understanding of the poem's overall systems of economic relations.

16. See Narducci 2002, 75–87.

17. This comparison is fundamental to the approach of Masters 1992, and is discussed in detail on his pp. 11–19.

18. Cic. *Att.* 9.7.C.1, writing to his allies Oppius and Balbus after taking Corfinium. He expresses the hope that three Pompeian lieutenants he has released will requite his generosity by urging Pompey toward reconciliation (Cic. *Att.* 9.7.C.2). Batstone and Damon 2006, 118, observe that for Caesar, "lasting victory will depend on the creation of active relationships of mutual obligation and friendship."

19. Similarly, after a victory in Spain, Caesar returns money that resident Roman citizens had pledged to Varro (fighting on the Pompeian side), restores their property, and gives "rewards" (*praemiis*) to the local inhabitants (2.21).

to appear “ungrateful” (*ingratus*) by not returning a benefit to those who sided with him (*referenda gratia*), nor arrogant in denying the people the right to confer that benefit (*in praeripiendo populi beneficio*, 3.1).

Caesar thus makes a great display of his practice of reciprocal values. He endorses *gratia*, shows his own generosity in pardoning his enemies,<sup>20</sup> and represents himself as someone who understands and values the practices of reciprocity.<sup>21</sup> When he allows Domitius to keep his funds, he also shows a disinterested evenhandedness, and even generosity, in dealing with money, a trait evident elsewhere as well. In what could be seen as a demonstration of his concern for the goods of the propertied classes, Caesar, as dictator, takes care to ensure that debts were repaid rather than repudiated (3.1).<sup>22</sup> He later condemns the Pompeian magistrates in Syria, overseen by Scipio, who extracted exorbitant taxes and practiced ruinous usury. Scipio himself would have raided the temple of Diana at Ephesus had he not been summoned to come to the immediate aid of Pompey in Macedonia (3.31). In this and one other instance, Caesar credits himself with preventing the looting of the Ephesian temple.<sup>23</sup> He also condemns the Roman nobles on the Pompeian side for their contention over the income and honors they will have after their anticipated victory (3.83). Thus, by his own account, Caesar shows no *incontinentia* in his economic affairs—only generosity or thrift.

### *Divine Reciprocity*

Lucan develops a Caesar figure who is specifically opposed to Caesar's own self-presentation, but who also contrasts with Aeneas, the exemplary Roman epic protagonist. These differences are most evident in the interactions of Lucan's Caesar with the divine. In his own account of the civil war, Caesar makes little mention of his cultivation of the gods, presum-

20. Fantham 1992 ad 2.512 notes that Caesar made “a public show of this act of clemency” toward Domitius “in a letter circulated to Cicero (*Att.* 9.7a) and others,” and in his own account, Caesar demonstrates clemency to the defeated at Pharsalia (3.98).

21. Batstone and Damon 2006, 118: “The objective of establishing and developing ties with contemporaries is evident in [Caesar's] *Civil War*, where Caesar, in a variety of ways, shows himself as a participant in relationships.” Caesar's reputation as a generous man is confirmed by Sallust: *Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur*, *Cat.* 54.

22. Similarly, Caesar condemns the attempts of the praetor M. Caelius Rufus to reduce the interest on debts or absolve them entirely, as well as related efforts by Milo to provoke a popular outcry for abolition of debts (3.20–22).

23. T. Ampius begins to take funds from the temple of Diana at Ephesus but flees when Caesar arrives, so he can declare that he twice came to the aid of the Ephesian treasury (*ita duobus temporibus Ephesiae pecuniae Caesar auxilium tulit*, 3.105).

ably because obligatory sacrifices and divinations could be omitted from the outline expected in a general's commentaries. Yet Lucan also had before him the example of Vergil's *pious Aeneas*, who cultivates the gods at every opportunity.

Lucan chooses a middle path between these two models. Among the poem's major characters, Caesar alone prays to the gods, first for help before crossing the Rubicon (1.195–203), then on his visit to Troy, where he sacrifices and asks the assistance of the gods who supported his putative Trojan ancestors (9.990–99).<sup>24</sup> In both prayers, Caesar invokes his relationship to Aeneas (*Phrygiique penates/gentis Iuleae*, 1.196–97; *Aeneaeque mei . . . lares*, 9.991–92), inviting comparison with his supposed ancestor.<sup>25</sup>

The invitation to read Caesar in light of Aeneas is particularly great in the case his prayer before the Rubicon. This is the first moment in the poem when the narrator steps aside to allow a character to act and speak. We already know from the opening of the poem that Lucan's epic will be quite a different sort from Vergil's. When Caesar enters the scene, meets the goddess Roma (who implores him to stop), begins his prayer, and invokes his Trojan ancestry, we are prepared to mark any deviations in his behavior from the actions of Aeneas, and the reader finds a rather surprising difference. In this first moment of human-divine interaction in the epic, Caesar makes no reciprocal gestures, but only issues a direct request for the help of the gods (*faue coeptis*, 1.200) and declares that his enemies will bear responsibility for the war he is about to set in motion (1.203).

As it happens, we know exactly how Aeneas would respond in a similar situation, if, as he was contemplating war, a divinity appeared to him near a riverbank to give him counsel. This precise scenario occurs at the opening of *Aeneid* 8, when the river god Tiberinus appears to Aeneas as he sleeps beside the river. In contrast to Roma's efforts to dissuade Caesar from fighting, Tiberinus encourages Aeneas's martial plans and instructs him to seek Evander as an ally. After he awakens from his dream, Aeneas duly raises the water of the river in his hands (8.69), then vows perpetual honor and gifts to Tiberinus and the nymphs of his stream (*semper honore meo, semper celebrabere donis*, 8.76–77). Caesar's response to Roma's

24. Ahl 1986, 211, notes this fact and the minor exception of Pompey's *Roma, faue coeptis* at 8.322, which echoes Caesar's identical words in his opening prayer at 1.200. Lucan expresses skepticism about Caesar's divine Trojan ancestry, saying that he only feigns descent from the Trojan Iulus (*Phrygiique ferens se Caesar Iuli*, 3.213).

25. "Caesar's arrogantly hypercritical and irreligious prayer is in ironic antithesis to the prayers of Virgil's dutiful Aeneas" (Martindale 1993, 50).



entreaty not to invade Italy is simply an abrupt prayer to her and other Roman gods for help in his assault. He then proceeds immediately to war (*inde moras soluit belli*, 1.204) and later boasts to his troops that the gods lead him onward (1.310). Lucan thus establishes an expectation for a reciprocal gesture on Caesar's part in order to confound it and set a precedent: Caesar will take the lead in the subversion of reciprocal practices. As if in response, Caesar's march on Rome causes gifts (*dona*, 1.558) to fall from temple walls as victims struggle in "unwelcome" (*non grati*, 1.611) sacrifices.

Caesar's disregard for the divine remains consistent throughout the rest of the poem. For his assault on Massilia, Caesar fells a sacred grove, one of the few places in the poem where anyone is said to worship. Although the rites near Massilia are barbaric, including human sacrifice (4.403–5),<sup>26</sup> Caesar's swift decision to fell the forest and assume responsibility for the sacrilege (*credite me fecisse nefas*, 3.436) nevertheless violates the principles of cautious ritual observance and mollification of foreign gods that were basic to Roman religious practice. While instructing his men before the battle at Pharsalia to set aside *pietas*, Caesar also tells them not to bother with prayer before battle (*nil opus est uotis*, 7.252) because they can summon fate with their swords. He later denies burial rites to his slain opponents (7.797–99). When Caesar is touring Troy, he nearly passes over the altar of Zeus of the hearth that was part of Priam's household, prompting his guide to ask: "*Herceas*" *monstrator ait* "*non respicis aras?*" (9.978–79). Indeed, Caesar is not disposed to take heed of altars or practice any cultivation of the divine.

One exception is Caesar's final prayer, which follows the account of his sightseeing at Troy and again links Caesar with Aeneas. Indeed, it contains the only explicit reference to Aeneas in the poem (*Aeneaeque mei . . . lares*, 9.991–92).<sup>27</sup> In a belated fit of *pietas*, Caesar makes an offering and vows to the gods that if they will grant him good fortune in the rest of his endeavors, he will restore the Trojan people:

di cinerum, Phrygias colitis quicumque ruinas,  
Aeneaeque mei, quos nunc Lauinia sedes  
seruat et Alba, lares, et quorum lucet in aris  
ignis adhuc Phrygius, nullique aspecta uirorum

26. Leigh 1999 argues that Caesar is a champion of enlightenment for destroying the site of these rites.

27. Wick 2004 ad 9.991.

Pallas, in abstruso pignus memorabile templo,  
 gentis Iuleae uestris clarissimus aris  
 dat pia tura nepos et uos in sede priore  
 rite uocat. date felices in cetera cursus,  
 restitutam populos; grata uice moenia reddent  
 Ausonidae Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent.  
 —(9.990–99)

Gods of the ashes, you who live in Phrygian ruins,  
 and household gods of my Aeneas, now preserved  
 in Lavinian abodes and Alba and on whose altars  
 the Phrygian fire still shines; and Pallas looked upon  
 by no male, the memorable guarantee in the hidden temple:  
 upon your altars the most glorious descendant of the Julian clan  
 offers holy incense and he solemnly invokes you in your  
 former home. Grant me a prosperous passage for the future:  
 I shall restore the people; in gratitude the Ausonians will give back  
 their walls to the Phrygians, and Pergamum will rise Roman.

Here again, however, Caesar falls short of Aeneas.<sup>28</sup> Caesar's grandiose self-description and ambitions are themselves perhaps unremarkable in an epic context, but his specific goal of restoring Troy is suspect. In the *Aeneid*, Juno forbade the reconstruction of Troy, and Caesar's historical contemporaries feared that he would relocate the seat of Roman power to the east.<sup>29</sup> Caesar's prayer also takes the commodity form that Vergil's Aeneas avoided: Caesar speaks of a "grateful return" or even "return of gratitude" (*grata uice*) that he will make to the gods by rebuilding Troy if they grant him success in his ventures. Here, as in the opening prayer to Roma, Lucan chooses to have Caesar interact with the divine, rather than spurn the gods entirely, only to illustrate how Caesar abandons the standards of reciprocity upheld by his supposed ancestor Aeneas.

28. Wick 2004 ad 9.996 observes that Caesar's *pietas* is nothing like that of Aeneas, noting that the narrator asks Caesar at 7.168–69 which underworld gods he has invoked, and that the narrator's language there resembles Caesar's own declaration of his piety here, undercutting it. For more Vergilian parallels in this scene, see Viansino 1995 ad 9.988, 989, 990–99, 997.

29. Wick 2004 ad 998ff. Lucan also adds a strange twist to Caesar's vows by adding in advance that they were not in vain (*uotaque turicremos non inrita fudit in ignes*, 9.989). Of course, if Caesar's vow is that he will restore Troy, he does not carry it out. Another possibility is that Aeneas has already carried out the mission of restoring Troy, though in Italy, in which case Caesar is seeking to bargain with the accomplishments of his ancestor as currency.

*Reciprocity with Mortals*

If Caesar takes an insouciant attitude toward the gods, he treats reciprocal relations with mortals opportunistically, dismissing or exploiting the traditional principles governing social relations whenever it is expedient. In a characteristic gesture, before the battle of Pharsalia he tells his troops to forget *pietas* (7.320). Here and elsewhere his partisans duly surpass the republican forces in the violation of family bonds, leading the narrator to declare Caesar *impius* (8.783).<sup>30</sup>

Lucan takes direct aim at Caesar's reputation for clemency (*clementia*).<sup>31</sup> Caesar tells Domitius, the foe he captures and pardons, to live by his "gift" (*munere*, 2.512) and says that if Domitius should eventually triumph, he will not consider him to have made any bargain for his own life (*et nihil hac uenia, si uiceris, ipse paciscor*, 2.515). The narrator declares that Domitius should have died and spared Roman honor (2.517–18), but Domitius decides to "flee the gifts of Caesar" (*Caesaris effuge munus*, 2.525) by rejoining the battle and fighting to the death. Domitius attains his wish, and the narrator's, when he is mortally wounded on the battlefield at Pharsalia, and he rejoices to escape a second pardon (*uenia*, 7.604). As Caesar's mixture of reciprocal (*uenia*) and commodity (*paciscor*) language suggests, his generosity represents only another calculated means to domination, imposing an unbearable obligation to survive and submit.<sup>32</sup>

The other major scene of Caesarian clemency involves the Pompeian generals Afranius and Petreius, who are cut off by Caesar in Spain and eventually surrender, whereupon Caesar pardons and frees them together with their troops (4.337–64). Lucan diminishes Caesar's clemency in this major engagement by omitting to mention that he spared the Pompeians even after they had killed some of his own soldiers during an interval of fraternization between both sides.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Caesar breaks the will

30. Armisen-Marchetti 2003, 248–49.

31. Weinstock 1971, 237–40, documents Caesar's reputation for clemency. Caesar himself avoided using the term *clementia* for his own actions, either because of its autocratic connotations (Collins 1972, 959–60) or because the terms he uses instead accorded better with philosophical concepts articulated in Greek (Griffin 2003b, 160–62).

32. I agree with Leigh 1997, 68, that in Lucan's poem "the acts of forgiveness and the acts of brutality are two sides of the same absolutist coin." Konstan 2005, 340, writes that he finds "no contemporary evidence whatever that Caesar's clemency was unwelcome to his fellow Romans." But that does not preclude Lucan from expressing this sentiment, any more than the fact that there was no evidence Cicero was at Pharsalia prevents Lucan from placing him there (7.63).

33. Ahl 1976, 195. Masters 1992, 78–87, takes issue with Ahl, arguing that if Lucan had wanted to undercut Caesar's reputation for *clementia* he could have left out entirely the scene where Caesar pardons Afranius and Petreius. But, as Ahl 1976, 190, observes, Lucan's "portrait

of Afranius before forgiving him, thus falling short of the fullest exercise of *clementia*.<sup>34</sup> Just as Lucan has Caesar perform the only full-scale formal interactions with the gods in order to subvert these gestures, he also shows Caesar practicing his famed *clementia* in order to denigrate it as self-serving and calculated.

The gift exchanges of Lucan's Caesar likewise subvert the historical reputation of Caesar as a generous man. Caesar views the opportunity for war as a gift from the fates (*munera*, 3.361). He motivates his soldiers by telling them that he will disburse (*donare*, 7.300) the land and wealth of nations as gifts to them after the war, but after the victory his language shifts. Caesar declares he will not give gifts (*donare*, 7.739), but that each man should take for himself the "payment for his blood" (*pro sanguine merces*, 7.738). This change in rhetoric exposes Caesar's generosity as the veneer of a mercenary enterprise.

Lucan highlights Caesar's bad reciprocal faith in a scene of diplomatic gift exchange. The gift at issue is Pompey's head, brought to Caesar by Ptolemy's servant (*dona ferens*, 9.1011). To win Caesar's favor, the servant reports that Ptolemy has "spared" (*donat*, 9.1017) him the trouble of further war with Pompey and claims that Ptolemy should be rewarded for killing his guest-friend (*hospes*, 9.1028) on Caesar's behalf. Caesar responds by attacking this travesty of reciprocal conventions, declaring indignantly that a severed Roman head cannot win favor as a gift. He commands Ptolemy's servant to remove these "gifts" (*dona*, 9.1065), complains that Ptolemy has stolen his power to "grant" (*donare*, 9.1067) life to the defeated, and imagines that he himself would have suffered the same "hospitality" (*hospitium*, 9.1083) had he arrived in Egypt first. Caesar even suggests that he would punish Ptolemy by sending him the head of Cleopatra "in exchange for the gift" (*pro munere*, 9.1070) of Pompey's head, except that Ptolemy would be only too glad to receive it. Pardon (*uenia*, 9.1089) is the highest reward he can offer for this murder: he will "forgive the abomination as a gift" (*donamusque nefas*, 9.1088).

In this last expression, Lucan plays on two meanings of *donamus*. The primary sense of the word indicates that Caesar will pardon Ptolemy for his crime. But the phrase *donamusque nefas* more literally signifies that

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of Caesar had to be plausible historically." In general, Lucan does not omit major significant events he objects to but instead often has his narrator decry them.

34. Sklenár 2003, 141–44. He sums up the discussions of Ahl and Masters on pp. 140–41. Sklenár 2003, 142, observes that Caesar "has no positive rhetoric of *clementia*" in these scenes and a third, where Caesar spares Metellus despite his refusal to allow Caesar to raid the Roman treasury (3.112–40, discussed at Sklenár 2003, 137–40).

that Caesar is himself giving an abomination as a gift. This hint of corruption finds confirmation in Lucan's description of Caesar's thoughts. Ptolemy's servant claims that the Egyptians have "bought" (*emimus*, 9.1021) Caesar with the pledge (*pignore*, 9.1020) of Pompey's head. This turns out to be the vain boast of a petty underling, but the statement does reflect Caesar's mercantile state of mind. Caesar does not turn away from the "gift" (*munera*, 9.1035) of Pompey's head immediately: he first takes a moment to admire and appreciate it. Hiding his joy, he feigns calculated tears:

utque fidem uidit sceleris tutumque putauit  
iam bonus esse socer, lacrimas non sponte cadentis  
effudit gemitusque expressit pectore laeto,  
non aliter manifesta potens abscondere mentis  
gaudia quam lacrimis, meritumque immane tyranni  
destruit et generi mauult lugere reuulsum  
quam debere caput.  
—(9.1037–43)

And when he saw the proof of the crime and thought it now  
was safe to be the loving father-in-law, he poured out tears which fell  
not of their own accord, and squeezed out groans from his happy  
breast, not able to conceal his mind's conspicuous joy  
except by tears, and he destroys the tyrant's savage  
service, preferring to lament his son-in-law's torn-off head  
than be in debt for it.

The word *fidem* in the first line of this passage conveys the irony of Caesar's belated and false show of *pietas* toward Pompey with particular acuteness. In place of the *fides* ("trust") Caesar should have shown Pompey in life, when he glimpses the severed head Caesar takes comfort in the "proof" (*fides*) of Pompey's demise. Lucan's suggestion that Caesar involves himself only with this degenerate *fides* is a stinging riposte to Caesar's self-representation in his own account of the civil war, where he takes pains to show his adherence to true *fides*.<sup>35</sup> A few lines later, the narrator openly says

35. Batstone and Damon 2006, 140: "The virtue that secures the kind of mutual obligations Caesar hopes to establish with his peers via the pardons at Corfinium, *fides*, is central to the picture Caesar creates of himself in the *Civil War*. He is concerned with its proper cultivation, its obligations, rewards, and risks."

that Caesar has left behind true *pietas* (*a uera longe pietate recessit*, 9.1056) and calls him a betrayer (*perfidī*, 9.1061). Caesar's pretense is exposed in the final words of this passage, which reveal that he prefers to feign a pious concern for Pompey rather than "owe" (*debere*) his death to Ptolemy. Despite his great show of upholding reciprocal norms, Caesar does not have the true feelings of generosity that Seneca insists must accompany a real exchange of benefits. For him, these gestures are only gambits.<sup>36</sup>

Caesar proves himself equally false in two exchanges with Pompey and Cleopatra. After Pompey's death, Caesar makes various ostensibly generous offerings to his departed spirit. He orders a burial ceremony where incense is burned (9.1091), says that he wishes Pompey to hear the "pious words" (*uoces . . . pias*, 9.1094–95) of his "father-in-law" (*soceri*, 9.1094) at his funeral, and complains that his prayers for reconciliation with Pompey went unheeded by the gods (9.1098). But Caesar's own followers silently scoff at his pretensions to generosity toward the dead Pompey (*nec turba querenti-credidit*, 9.1105–6). In an encounter with Cleopatra, Caesar deceives the Roman people on a far grander scale. Though armed, Caesar is Cleopatra's "guest" (*hospitis armati*, 10.149; cf. 10.183, 10.455). He acts with outsized generosity to the detriment of Rome when he "gives Egypt away" (*donare Pharon*, 10.81; cf. 10.356) to her rather than keep it as a benefit to his country. Of course, this is not true generosity: the sexual "gifts" (*donis*) of Cleopatra have actually "bought this accord" (*pax . . . emptā*) with Caesar (10.107).

### *Commodity Exchange*

Caesar is the sole character in the poem said to be "bought" in this way, and, as we have seen, Lucan uses the word *emere* only in connection with him. Lucan thus builds a unique profile for Caesar with a pattern of mercantile activity that complements his abuse of reciprocal practices. It is perhaps no surprise that Caesar should represent a threat through his economic behavior, because Lucan models him in part on the firebrand Catiline, who tried to overthrow the Roman Republic.<sup>37</sup> But where Sallust emphasized how Catiline's reckless prodigality fomented strife, Lucan presents a Caesar who achieves his extravagant personal ends in a fully deliberate and controlled way.

36. In this respect, Lucan's Caesar is comparable to the Odysseus of Euripides' *Cyclops*, whose "commercial attitude to *xenia* . . . adds to his image as a representative of civilized brutality" (von Reden 1995, 136).

37. Narducci 2002, 205–11.

Metellus, the magistrate who opposes Caesar's attempt to sack the Roman treasury, gives the most concise expression of Caesar's view of money. Metellus himself is motivated by greed (*auri . . . amor*, 3.119),<sup>38</sup> but he says that Caesar has no need of the Roman treasury because he already has war (*pacis ad exutae spoliū non cogit egestas: bellum, Caesar, habes*, 3.132–33). Metellus's point is that Caesar can take all the wealth he wishes from the regions he conquers and so should leave the Roman treasury intact. But throughout the poem Caesar strives primarily after power (*flagrans cupidine regni*, 7.240) and slaughter (so that, e.g., he becomes temporarily *satiatus clade*, 9.950).<sup>39</sup> Read in this light, Metellus's statement expresses the fact that war itself, rather than wealth, is Caesar's goal. As the narrator observes, whereas others would have been satisfied with the reward of power over Rome (*bellorum maxima merces*, 2.655) Caesar, in his quest for ever-greater domination, finds it insufficient. He even ignores the measureless gold of Egypt, preferring a pilgrimage to the tomb of Alexander, his predecessor in world domination (10.17–19). In retrospect, therefore, Caesar's claim to his soldiers that he was not initiating civil war for either spoils or a kingdom (*neque praeda meis neque regum quaeritur armis*, 1.350) appears at least half true. Rather than hoarding wealth, Caesar uses it to fuel his warfare.<sup>40</sup>

38. In fact, Lucan is mainly taking the opportunity here to deplore the degeneracy of the times once again, since it is difficult to see how we should consider Metellus greedy at the moment when he is protecting the wealth of the Republic.

39. This last description recalls that of Vergil's Juno at 7.298 (*odiis aut exsaturata quieui*) (Wick 2004 ad 9.950). Other instances that either illustrate or reflect Caesar's desire for slaughter include: 1.143–50, 2.439–46, 2.650–51 (he cannot suffer peace), 3.50–52, 3.108–40, 3.358–61, 3.362–66, 5.240–48, 5.310–14 (war pleases Caesar when even his soldiers have rejected it), 5.409–11, 7.292–94, 7.313, 7.809–11, 7.820–24, 7.825–46, 7.786–808. Hunink 1992 ad 3.51 gives some of these examples and notes the paradox of Caesar preferring war to victory itself.

40. On his visit to Egypt, Caesar seems prepared to destroy the world to obtain wealth (*marte paratus opes mundi quaesisse ruina*, 10.150), but the narrator qualifies this statement by saying that even a Fabricius, a Curius, or a Cincinnatus would be tempted to bring back such spoils in triumph (*talem duxisse triumphum*, 10.154). The point is that Caesar has a desire to convert these riches into political power, as did these great Romans of old, though Caesar is more ambitious. I thus disagree with Ahl 1986, 227, who writes that for Caesar in this episode "gold is no longer a means to power, power is a means to acquire gold and the luxuries of a decadent life." Ahl 1976, 225, sees this as part of an overall change in Caesar's character when he is in Egypt, whereby he becomes more weaker and more effeminate—hence the comparison of Caesar under siege in the Egyptian palace to a boy or woman trying to find safety (10.456–59) or to Medea (10.464–67). But Lucan does not present Caesar as consistently pusillanimous in Egypt. During the same siege he describes Caesar's fortitude and portrays him as attacking like a besieger (*obsessusque gerit—tanta est constantia mentis/expugnantis opus*, 10.490). Lucan's comparison of Caesar to boys and distressed women is instead casual slander.

That a Roman potentate should seek funds for war would hardly have surprised Lucan's audience. Caesar's insistence on viewing of the world in terms of commodity exchange is another matter, however. Caesar asserts to his soldiers that he deserves a "reward" (*merces*, 1.340) for his labors. He appeals to Antony to cross the Adriatic quickly, telling him that he is "spending" (*impendo*, 5.491) his vows in an effort to get him there. When Caesar enlists the help of Amyclas to recross the Adriatic, Caesar assures the poor boatman that he will no longer owe (*debebis*, 5.534) everything to his labors, because Caesar will make him rich. Just as Caesar does not want to be indebted to Ptolemy for the murder of Pompey, he refuses to "owe the fates" (*fatis debere*, 6.5) for any victories after the battle of Pharsalia. He asks his men rhetorically whether any foreigner would give even the smallest amount of his blood to have "bought" (*emptum*, 7.282) Pompey as ruler over Italy, and he tells them that on this day they will have either the "reward" (*merces*, 7.303) or penalty of war. Caesar tells Ptolemy's servant that Pompey desired to "owe" (*debere*, 9.1026) his life to Egypt rather than Caesar, and he claims that he was willing to share equality with Pompey as his "reward" (*mercede*, 9.1101). Caesar often projects his own self-interested calculation onto others, such as Amyclas, the foreigners who support Pompey, or Pompey himself, who is supposed to have "bought" his clients (*emptique clientes*, 1.314). Other characters accordingly recognize this feature of Caesar's behavior. Domitius tells Caesar that he will ultimately receive a due "reward" (*mercede*, 7.610) for his crimes. Cato tests the loyalty of his troops by daring them to take his head to Caesar for a reward (*mercede*, 9.280; *pretio*, 9.281).

In the paradoxical manner of the merchant, Caesar generates tremendous waste while carefully reckoning the lives of others for his own use. During the battle of Pharsalia, he inspects the swords, hands, arms, and faces of his men.<sup>41</sup> Afterward, he insists that the corpses remain on the battlefield so he can view them as he dines, and he counts up the piles of Pompeian dead (*sidentes in tabem spectat acervos/et Magni numerat populos*, 7.791–92).<sup>42</sup> Although Caesar meticulously measures his own human resources and those of his enemies, he values them only for their use to him. Caesar's mutinous men thus complain that he uses up their lives as if they were worth nothing:

41. *inspiciet et gladios, qui toti sanguine manent,/qui niteant primo tantum mucrone cruenti,/quae presso tremat ense manus, quis languida tela,/quis contenta ferat, quis praestet bella iubenti,/quem pugnare iuuat, quis uoltum ciue perempto/mutet*, 7.560–65.

42. Lovatt 1999, 133, refers to Caesar in this scene as an "inhuman accountant."



quaeris terraque marique  
 his ferrum iugulis animasque effundere uiles  
 quolibet hoste paras.  
 —(5.262–64)

You seek by land and sea  
 a sword for these our throats, you are ready to pour out our lives  
 so cheap by any enemy.

The soldiers' phrase *animas . . . uiles* echoes the description by Drances in the *Aeneid* of Turnus's low estimation of the lives of Rutulians he squanders. The intertext reinforces the impression of Caesar as acting with a mercantile and callous self-interest. It also suggests his troops no longer believe Caesar's professions that he seeks only what is best for their welfare (1.340–42), or that, as he will later claim, they can seize control of the world with only a minimal expenditure of blood (7.269–70). The soldiers go on to tell Caesar that the enjoyment of their lives is gone because they have "consumed" it in service to his wars (*usus abit uitae, bellis consumpsimus aeuum*, 5.275). The narrator later confirms the soldiers' view when he informs us that, at the close of the battle of Pharsalia:

Caesar, ut Hesperio uidit satis arua natare  
 sanguine, parcendum ferro manibusque suorum  
 iam ratus ut uiles animas perituraque frustra  
 agmina permisit uitae.  
 —(7.728–31)

When Caesar saw the fields drenched sufficiently with Hesperian blood, thinking now that he should rein in his soldiers' swords and hands, he granted life to worthless souls, to columns whose death would have had no point.

Caesar is willing to spare the remaining Pompeian lives because he has already generated enough slaughter and sees no profit in expending them, however cheap they are to him (*uiles animas*).

In addition to frequently offering to pay his soldiers for fighting,<sup>43</sup> Cae-

43. E.g., 5.240–48, 5.307–9, 5.328–32, 7.299–303, 7.736–60; cf. 1.299–302, 1.340–42. This though he criticizes their greed: 5.355–56.

sar uses mercantile language to describe the lives he uses up in the course of the war. He tells his soldiers that the Pompeians hold their lives “cheap” (*uilis*, 4.276) and that it will be “his loss” if they die (*damno peritura meo*, 4.277). During the rebellion of his own troops, he speaks of them as interchangeable, telling them that fortune will give him as many men as he has weapons (5.326–27), and these new recruits will take from the veterans the “reward” (*mercede*, 5.331) they earned through their hardships. Caesar sees his men as commodities, and at times even they themselves adopt this perspective, as when they greet his return from an ill-starred sea voyage with protests that he risked death alone while leaving their “cheap lives” (*uiles animas*, 5.683) behind. And as his choice to dine in view of the battlefield suggests, Caesar does not use the lives of his men and others just to obtain his political ends, but also for the pleasure of the violence itself. Thus he delights in the possibility of making war en route, so that his marches are not wasted (*ipsum non perdat iter*, 2.442), and thinks it a “loss” (*damnum*, 3.365) if subject peoples hesitate to foment rebellions he can crush.

The opinions of Caesar’s soldiers shift as they either object to his commodification of their lives or acquiesce in it. In the latter case, Caesar’s soldiers become extensions and reflections of their general: during their rebellion against Caesar, the narrator tells us that they are willing to “sell their swords” (*miles . . . uenditat enses*, 5.246–48) to the highest bidder. They also ask Caesar whether he thinks them foolish enough to be unaware that their greatest “reward” (*merces*, 5.268) would come from betraying him, and, after the battle of Pharsalia, they long to know what their “reward” (*mercede*, 7.751) will be for their guilt.<sup>44</sup> Laelius, one of Caesar’s men, speaks in a way perfectly exemplary of both Caesar and his troops. When he professes his devotion to Caesar, he declares himself willing to brutally kill any of his relatives, including his pregnant wife. He also says that if commanded to melt the statues of the gods down for the military mint (*castrensis . . . monetae*, 1.380), he would gladly do so. The image of the divine statues melted down and stamped as currency perfectly captures the conversion of reciprocal into commodity values that Caesar represents: the gods, with whom one should have reciprocal relations, are themselves made into the very symbols of short-term mercantile expediency whose invention Lucan condemns (6.402–7).

44. Gall 2005, 109, observes that, even in their rebellion against Caesar, his soldiers are motivated by a mixture of principle, greed, and brutality.

The narrator later comments, in the context of the Alexandrian War, that all soldiers are for sale (*uenales*, 10.408),<sup>45</sup> but it is significant that among the troops of the three major leaders, only Caesar's men are actually described this way.<sup>46</sup> This portrayal of course runs directly counter to the way that both the historical Caesar and his soldiers preferred to see themselves. Caesar gave monetary incentives to his troops infrequently, and in general "Roman soldiers had pretensions (at least at the higher ranks) to being more than mercenaries."<sup>47</sup> Among the commanders, Curio, with his "bribable" (*uenali*, 1.269) tongue and sale of Rome (*uendidit*, 4.824), is the most conspicuous example of someone whom Caesar buys outright.

With the image of a balance, Lucan offers a fitting metaphor that sums up Caesar's mercantile nature. Scale imagery is pervasive in the poem,<sup>48</sup> and it is associated with Pompey and Cato as well. But Caesar is invariably and uniquely figured as controlling the scales for weighing, and thus as determining the outcome of the turning point the image represents. Caesar knows that the grain supply was the of "greatest weight in deciding the people's favor" (*summa fauoris*/. . . *momenta*, 3.55–56), and the Masilians protest to Caesar that they can have no "decisive weight" in deciding the outcome of the war (*non pondera rerum/nec momenta sumus*, 3.337–38). Caesar wages a war in Spain that will "deal out the greatest deciding weights of fate to the leaders" (*maxima sed fati ducibus momenta daturum*, 4.3). Curio himself, at the very point when he accepts Caesar's bribes of gold, becomes "the decisive weight on the scales":

momentumque fuit mutatus Curio rerum  
Gallorum captus spoliis et Caesaris auro.  
—(4.819–20)

45. A familiar sentiment, it would seem; Horace gives a similar picture of the soldiery at *Ep.* 2.2.37–40, where a commander encourages a man to fight who formerly strove to win spoils and alleviate his poverty. The commander exhorts him to go to the front, where he can win rewards; the soldier responds that the only soldier who will go is one who has lost his wallet: *i, bone, quo uirtus tua te uocat, i pede fausto, / grandia laturus meritorum praemia. quid stas?* / *post haec ille catus, quantumuis rusticus, "ibit, / ibit eo quo uis qui zonam perdidit," inquit* (cited in Harris 2006, 300).

46. Accordingly, Caesar's soldiers are no models of *pietas*. They complain that by preventing them from robbing the gods and men, Caesar has made them poor and so pious against their will (*paupertate pii*, 5.273).

47. Harris 2006, 312.

48. Heitland and Haskins 1887, xc.

Won over by Gallic booty and Caesar's gold  
the altered Curio turned the balance of events.

Caesar reminds his own rebellious troops that they could not in the past tip the scales of his fortunes one way or the other, nor can they now: *an uos momenta putatis/ulla dedisse mihi?*<sup>49</sup> In each of these instances, Lucan represents Caesar as controlling a weight to be placed on a scale, and in the case of Curio, Lucan makes the connection between this imagery and Caesar's mercantile behavior explicit: Caesar weights the scales in his own favor, to the detriment of the Roman world.

Lucan's decision to omit the Olympian gods as major actors from his poem means that there is no traditional epic weighing of the fates by Zeus or Jupiter. It is Caesar who consistently and successfully weighs out the course of events. In this way, Caesar assumes the role Jupiter has in the *Aeneid*. Lucan provides other points of comparison with Jupiter as well, describing Caesar as a thunderbolt (*fulmen*, 1.151) who shows all-but-divine force and mastery in his prosecution of the war.<sup>50</sup> But the implicit comparison of Caesar and Jupiter ultimately leads to a crucial contrast: Jupiter metes out justice with the scales, while Caesar uses them to measure his personal gain.

Scale imagery also creates a contrast with Vergil's Aeneas. Unlike his putative Trojan ancestor, Caesar engages willingly in mercantile deliberations over his fate and the fates of others. Yet such behavior does not assimilate Caesar to Turnus either. Caesar may deceive others with a pretense of aristocratic reciprocity, but unlike Turnus, he does not deceive himself. Caesar is the greatest Roman epic exemplar of the active and unrestrained force of mercantile calculation, which seeks maximum power and causes tremendous destruction.

## Pompey

When Caesar accuses Pompey of having "bought" his clients (*emptique clientes*, 1.314), we know from Pompey's other actions that Caesar is sim-

49. Caesar also decides to "compensate for" (*pensare*, 9.1002) his delay in Troy by sailing onward more swiftly.

50. Jupiter himself does not govern the world: *mentimur regnare Iouem*, 7.447. Sextus Pompey, requesting a prophecy from Erichtho, asks about his own destiny with the words *quo tanti praeponderet alea fati*, 6.603. The combined images of a die and the balance of fates nicely represent the confusion of *fata* and *fortuna* in the poem, but Erichtho herself is in a position only to foresee the future, not to change it.

ply projecting his own methods. Whereas Caesar commands his troops to forget *pietas*, Pompey remains the “committed son-in-law” of Caesar (*genero . . . pio*, 6.305).<sup>51</sup> Pompey’s need for such relationships, and indeed his very ability to have them, distinguishes him from both Caesar and Cato.<sup>52</sup> These qualities also make Pompey a paradoxical figure,<sup>53</sup> and consequently, have led to sharply divergent interpretations of his character. Bartsch views Pompey as weak and vain, particularly during and after the battle of Pharsalia.<sup>54</sup> Narducci, on the other hand, argues that Lucan acts as an apologist, offering a more favorable account of Pompey’s character and actions than do the historical sources.<sup>55</sup> Both scholars at times press their cases too far.<sup>56</sup> Ahl writes more persuasively that Pompey “is neither totally good nor totally evil; his conduct hovers between altruism and self-seeking.”<sup>57</sup>

51. This is the narrator’s explanation for why Pompey did not pursue his advantage at Dyrrachium and defeat Caesar. Narducci 2002, 298–99, takes this statement as an exculpation of Pompey for the missed opportunity and ultimate loss at Pharsalia. But Pompey also has significant faults that contribute to his loss (Bartsch 1997, 79–84).

52. Narducci 2002, 296.

53. Ahl 1976, 158.

54. Bartsch 1997, 73–100, in particular, e.g., p. 83. She argues that we must read Pompey’s progressively greater failures against the narrator’s increasing praise of him. The narrator thus becomes much like Lucan’s Cato in that he chooses to support a doomed leader in a war that no one can win.

55. Narducci 2002, 279–353.

56. Bartsch acknowledges that Cato offers qualified praise of Pompey in Book 9, but then, as part of her argument that the overall representation of Pompey is unfavorable, she attends closely only to Cato’s criticisms in the eulogy. Narducci 2002, 352 n. 238, contests her reading on these grounds. For his part, Narducci has difficulty reconciling Pompey’s awkwardly disastrous proposal to seek aid from Rome’s great Parthian enemy in Book 8 with what he argues is an unstintingly favorable treatment of Pompey up to that point. He appeals to the incompleteness of the poem to suggest that Lucan has contradictory impulses, both praising Pompey as Stoic *proficiens* and criticizing him along with the historical sources. Lucan did not have time to reconcile these opposed tendencies, he argues, but the poem as we have it shows the ultimate dominance of the favorable view (Narducci 2002, 330–31). Yet we can only judge the poem by what we have, not by what we conjecture Lucan might have written. And if we assume that Lucan wrote the books of his epic in order (as the accounts of the early publication of the first three books and the unfinished ending suggest), then the later books, with their more unfavorable portrayal of Pompey, must represent his final view. Narducci anticipates the first of these objections by condemning “deconstructionist criticism” (“critica di matrice più o meno vagamente ‘decostruzionistica,’” Narducci 2002, 331) for arbitrarily denying that sources external to the text can be valid critical tools, but this counterattack does not address the weaknesses in his argument. There is also a certain irony in the fact that a critic who so vehemently denounces “deconstruction” (cf. Narducci 1999), which we might describe as the identification (or positing) of oppositional inconsistencies in a text, proposes just such an opposition, though he ultimately locates it in the person of the author rather than the structure of the text.

57. Ahl 1976, 158, bases his judgment in part on Cato’s eulogy (9.190–214). Cato says that

In his diffidence, Pompey resembles Aeneas.<sup>58</sup> Vergil's protagonist perseveres despite his doubts and failures and so personifies the toil of founding and maintaining Roman civilization. Pompey also champions the cause of Rome and comes to symbolize it.<sup>59</sup> But he is fighting for the late Republic, which, like him, is undone by its own flaws.<sup>60</sup> Pompey is equally "decadent and doomed, but still capable of eliciting affection," like the much-honored but tottering oak tree to which he is compared (1.136–43).<sup>61</sup> Though Cato would deny it,<sup>62</sup> Pompey's death marks the true end of the Republic:<sup>63</sup> when Ptolemy has Pompey murdered, the narrator speaks of the assassin as driving the sword into "our vitals" (*uiscera nostra*, 8.556), a phrase that recalls the poem's opening image of Romans turning their swords into their own innards (*in sua . . . uiscera*, 1.3).

### *Pompeian Pietas*

The introduction of Pompey through comparison to an oak tree encapsulates his involvement in exchange relations. Military leaders bestowed on the oak, now weak and dying, spoils and gifts (*exuuias*, 1.137; *dona ducum*, 1.138), while the populace held it in honor (*colitur*, 1.143). As the metaphor suggests, Pompey engages deeply in the reciprocal relations that bound the Republic together. Amid civil war, however, these ties cannot withstand Caesar's mercenary ferocity, and Pompey cannot adapt. Tacitus writes that the old aristocratic families of Rome declined through misplaced generosity and ostentation.<sup>64</sup> Though from provincial origins, Lucan's Pompey suffers precisely this fate.

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Pompey did not observe the limits of power but was useful at a time when few others did, that he guided the Senate while still leaving it in control, and that he preferred war to peace but loved peace when he was at war. Cf. Ahl 1976, 183.

58. Ahl 1976, 156; Narducci 2002, 281–86. A case might also be made for a resemblance between Vergil's Latinus and Pompey. Both are weak and indecisive, misjudge the strength of their opposition, and flee from battle. But Latinus is a secondary character in the *Aeneid*, whereas Pompey is central to the *Civil War*. Latinus shrinks from conflict altogether, but Pompey commands the republican forces in the field before he is defeated and put to flight at Pharsalia.

59. Leigh 1997, 148–50; Narducci 2002, 284.

60. Ahl 1976, 183–84 observes that Pompey differs from Aeneas in this respect. Cf. Rossi 2000 and Narducci 2002, 281–86, for interpretations of Pompey as Lucan's response to Vergil's Aeneas.

61. Ahl 1976, 159.

62. 9.257–62.

63. Ahl 1976, 185, 221–22; Narducci 2002, 284.

64. *dites olim familiae nobilium aut claritudine insignes studio magnificentiae prolabantur*, *Ann.* 3.55.

Pompey shares his closest bond with his wife, Cornelia. This relationship lends him humanity, by contrast with Cato's abstemious, unconsummated remarriage to Marcia and Caesar's lust for Cleopatra.<sup>65</sup> Pompey tells Cornelia that her last act of *fides* should be to love him after he dies (8.83), and she shows herself willing to keep her "trust" (*fidem*, 9.98) with Pompey by fulfilling his wish to command their sons to continue the war after his death. Before Pompey is killed, Cornelia offers to sacrifice her life to the vengeful spirit of his previous wife, Julia, though she would rather have "paid" (*dependisse*, 8.101) her life to provide him victory at Pharsalia (8.97–105).<sup>66</sup> As Cornelia watches his pyre burn on the distant shore, she wishes she could pour "generous tears" (*largos . . . fletus*, 9.59) into his wounds.

The builder of this pyre, a former quaestor of Pompey named Cordus, shows equally great fealty. Whereas Caesar's soldiers demonstrate loyalty to their general with vows to kill their relatives, Cordus honors his personal commitments by risking his life to carry out last rites for the slain Pompey. Cordus asks Fortune to allow Pompey at least a "meager" (*uilem*, 8.736) funeral and borrows for the purpose some burning wood from the humble pyre of another unfortunate whose corpse was held of little account by his relatives (*corpus uile suis*, 8.744). Cordus begs the pardon (*ueniam*, 8.749) of this man's spirit for disturbing his pyre with a hand seeking to offer welcome burial to another (*manus hospita*, 8.748). Cordus proceeds to afford Pompey the "service" (*officiis*, 8.763) of a burial (*munere*, 8.741). When dawn breaks as he is performing these duties, he flees to avoid detection as a Pompeian, but eventually "*pietas* compels him to complete his service" (*cogit pietas imponere finem/officio*, 8.785–86).

Cordus's burial of Pompey is the only deed in the poem described as an *officium*, or "dutiful service."<sup>67</sup> Pompey alone evokes such counter-generosity through his *beneficia*, not only from the woman bound to him by ties of marriage, but also by men such as Cordus. Such loyalty contrasts with the behavior of Caesar's soldiers, who flaunt their willingness to

65. Narducci 2002, 296.

66. Cornelia's use of the commodity term *dependisse*, as is usual with this idiom, suggests the harshness of the sacrifice she is willing to undergo, which is similar to a punishment that would also be described in commodity terms. This nuance does not indicate any unwillingness to sacrifice herself, but rather emphasizes the severity of the ordeal she would willingly suffer.

67. Cornelia describes it this way as well at 9.64. Lucan uses the word once elsewhere, figuratively, at 10.230, to describe the usual "services" of the Nile waters.

serve the highest bidder. Pompey is also the only main character who inspires *pietas*, as he does here in Cordus; Cato is not said to produce it, and Caesar can only feign it (9.1056, 10.363). The historical Caesar wrote that when he approached the towns of Roman Italy at the outset of the war, the local inhabitants favored his cause to such an extent that they expelled the opposing military commanders who had taken up positions there.<sup>68</sup> In Lucan's account, it is rather Pompey who inspires the goodwill of the townsfolk, but they must weigh their fidelity to him against their fear of Caesar: *pronior in Magnum populus, pugnatque minaci/cum terrore fides* (2.453–54). Inevitably, fear triumphs, and events sweep away any remaining loyalty: *facilis sed uertere mentes/terror erat, dubiamque fidem fortuna ferebat* (2.460–61). This last observation by the narrator anticipates an underlying cause of Pompey's eventual defeat: Caesar's luck, will, and willingness to buy figures such as Curio will overwhelm the allegiances on which Pompey relies.

The greatest manifestation of *pietas* toward Pompey comes from the people of Lesbos, who receive him when he comes to meet Cornelia there after his defeat at Pharsalia. Indeed, the scene of Pompey's reception by the Mytileneans contains by far the densest accumulation of language expressing reciprocal ties in the poem. Before Pompey reaches Lesbos, he stops first at Larisa, whose citizens promise him gifts (*munera*, 7.715), open their temples and houses to him, and wish to make themselves "partners in his ruin" (*socios . . . cladibus*, 7.716), even though Pompey tells them to offer their allegiance to Caesar (*uictori praestate fidem*, 7.721). The narrator comments that this day gave Pompey "real proof of the favor he had earned" (*uera fides quaesiti . . . fauoris*, 7.726). On Lesbos itself, once Pompey is reunited with Cornelia, the Mytileneans express their continuing fondness for Pompey with an outpouring of reciprocal gestures. They describe Cornelia as a "pledge" (*pignus*, 8.111) they preserved for him and say that they are joined to him by a "sacred bond" (*sacro . . . foedere*, 8.112). They ask him to stay within their "friendly walls" (*muros/. . . socios*, 8.112–13) so that in the future Romans may come as "guests" (*hospes Romanus*, 8.115) to worship at the spot where he stayed. They offer him the "adornments" and "gold" of their temples (*templorum cultus aurumque deorum*, 8.121). They also ask him not to doubt their "loyalty" (*fidem*, 8.126) even though he has been defeated. Pompey is cheered by their *pietas* (8.127) and by the fact that "good faith" (*fidem*, 8.129) still exists among them. He says that he showed with "no small pledge" (*non paruo pignore*,

68. Caes. *B.Ciu.* 1.12–13.



8.130, i.e., Cornelia) that no other land is more "gratifying" (*gratius*, 8.130) to him. Lesbos is the only place, he declares, which really offered him "trust" (*fidem*, 8.141). The Mytileneans express their "love" (*amore*, 8.155) for Cornelia with their laments as she leaves them and declare that she was never a "burdensome guest" (*gravis hospita*, 8.157).

A fundamental feature of reciprocal ties is that they transcend expediency, and even as Pompey himself generously urges the Mytileneans to consider their own practical interests and transfer their allegiance to Caesar, they refuse and continue to practice and preserve those supposedly fundamental Roman virtues: *fides*, *pietas*, *hospitium*, and the preservation and return of *gratia*. These values no longer operate in Rome; instead, like other virtues, they have migrated to the periphery of the civilized world. In retreat, Pompey, with little to give, has no choice but to simply accept such gestures. But these goodwill offerings testify to his earlier generosity, as do other passages in the poem. Immediately after his defeat at Pharsalia, the narrator counsels Pompey to withdraw from the battle in dignity and choose one of the lands he "gave as gifts" (*donata*, 7.710) to die in. The narrator also speaks of how Pompey, at the height of his glory, "gave many triumphs as gifts" (*multos patriae donasse triumphos*, 8.815) to Rome by not claiming more than three for himself. Cato, in his eulogy for Pompey, observes that while Pompey possessed more riches than a man should, he also gave more of them to the Roman treasury than he kept for himself (*immodicas possedit opes, sed plura retentis/intulit*, 9.197–98).

Contrary to some Stoic readings of the poem,<sup>69</sup> Pompey's desire to preserve his reputation does not reveal him as a failed philosopher; he remains instead a Roman general. He built his character and reputation by delivering great military victories to the people of Rome, for which in return they gave him great acclaim and the cognomen Magnus. He was even generous enough to "grant" some of his triumphs back to the people, binding him and them more closely together.<sup>70</sup> Pompey's unstinting generosity in this circuit of giving between general and populace engendered the deep gratitude toward him of the people of Lesbos. Pompey prefers this social dynamic because he understands and succeeds at it, as demonstrated by his dream before the battle of Pharsalia where the Roman people applaud and adore him in the theater that he built for them (7.7–44). Alone among

69. Marti 1945 and George 1992.

70. Habinek 2000, 268, remarks on how the practice of gaining *gloria* "links the powerful and less powerful in society."

the major Roman figures, Pompey continues to foster reciprocal ties and is the unique object of abundant expressions of reciprocal allegiance. In this way, Pompey represents the Roman Republic in its ideal form, as the generous man.<sup>71</sup>

### *Entangling Alliances*

Yet Pompey's desire for the love and approval of others ultimately proves a weakness, undermining his resolve at key moments when he cannot endure the disapproval of others.<sup>72</sup> Pompey's troops, who viewed themselves as his partisans (*nos . . . Pompei duxit in arma . . . amor, partesque fauore/fecimus*, 9.227–28), claim that *fides* existed only when he was alive (*quo fuerat uiuente fides*, 9.249). But with these values dead in a time of civil war (*pietasque fidesque/destituunt*, 5.297–98), Pompey is out of his element. He yields to his troops in Book 2 when they are unwilling to face Caesar in Italy, ultimately a mistake. Cicero knows Pompey's nature very well, and before the battle of Pharsalia he challenges Pompey's commitment to the norms of reciprocity in order to coerce him into offering battle to Caesar. Cicero calls Pompey "ungrateful" (*ingrate*, 7.76) because he is supposedly unwilling to trust the gods and the cause of the Senate. By this and other means, Cicero helps persuade Pompey to attack prematurely, resulting in spectacular defeat. Lucan's Pompey only knows how to please and be pleased in return: his last word in the poem is *amant* (8.635), which he speaks while imagining that if he dies nobly, his wife and children will love him all the more. But he does not know how to use political force or to negotiate with shrewd calculation.

Lucan highlights Pompey's erroneous adherence to the norms of reciprocity by making them the cause of his death. The Senate had approved Pompey's arrangement to restore the kingdom of Egypt as a gift to the young Ptolemy's father (*donata est regia Lagi*, 5.62). When Pompey arrives in Egypt, the watchman signals the arrival of a "guest(-friend)" (*hospitis*, 8.473), and Pothinus warns Ptolemy that he should take care not to allow such a *hospes* (8.498) to seize the throne. The narrator puts in an ironic

71. Plut. *Pomp.* 1 refers to Pompey as a particularly good practitioner of gift reciprocity, saying that Pompey had an ability to give gifts without arrogance and receive them without loss of dignity. The prominence of this comment, at the close of Plutarch's first paragraph, shows that he saw such gift-giving ability as one of Pompey's important and distinctive qualities.

72. Ahl 1976, 174–82.

word for the preservation of Roman *fides* by saying that civil war itself should keep faith (*seruate fidem*, 8.547) and allow Pompey to be killed by the power of Romans rather than by an Egyptian. Such limited expectations for Roman *fides* show how far the virtue has degenerated and how perilous it is for Pompey to continue to rely on it. Pompey's men fear that he might bow before a scepter that he himself had bestowed as a gift (*sceptra sua donata manu*, 8.595). After Pompey's death, Cornelia attempts suicide, declaring that she, at least, would not die by the "gift" (*munere*, 8.653) of the Egyptian king. Then, as we have seen, Ptolemy takes the very head of Pompey and offers it to Caesar. Sextus Pompey sums up his father's fault:

hospitii fretus superis et munere tanto  
in proauos, cecidit donati uictima regni.  
—(9.131–32)

Relying on the gods of hospitality and his generous gift  
towards the king's ancestors, he fell, the victim of the kingdom he had  
given.

Not only does Pompey die for this overreliance on reciprocal norms, but his body too is converted into a token of the perversion of these norms when the king of Egypt sends his head as a gift to Caesar.

Perhaps more pathetic than Pompey's personal failure as the standard-bearer for the reciprocal values of the Republic are his attempts to adapt to the changed world of civil war. In his confrontation with Caesar, Pompey tries to rival Caesar's calculation but fails because it is not in his nature. During Pompey's withdrawal before Caesar's advance in Italy, the narrator notes the absence of a legion Pompey had once given to Caesar:

dumque ipse [sc. Magnus] ad bella uocaret  
donauit socero Romani sanguinis usum.  
—(2.476–77)

Pompey granted his father-in-law the gift  
of Roman blood until he summoned them to war himself.

Fantham's note on the passage is to the point: "The tone is sarcastic, as if Roman lives were a commodity to be loaned by one family member to an-

other. *Sanguis* itself suggests death, which would make the loan unreturnable as well as immoral.<sup>73</sup>

Pompey is, according to his nature, giving a gift to a relative, and the narrator could have described this offer without speaking of it as blood that will be used or expended. But the general corruption of civil war frames this act differently. Rather than present the legion as an integral unit, Lucan reminds his audience that it is composed of mortal men and vulnerable bodies. Pompey tries to interact properly with his relative but cannot keep from imitating Caesar's tendency to make use of the blood and lives of others. Pompey tries to lend these out, as the mercantile Caesar might, but gets no return on his investment. Although he gets the legion back, its previous service to Caesar has made it unreliable.<sup>74</sup> He tries to play Caesar's game but manages it poorly.

Later, when Pompey is in retreat from Pharsalia, he compares the value of his life to that of Caesar's:

quamuis summo de culmine lapsus  
nondum uile sui pretium scit sanguinis esse,  
seque, memor fati, tantae mercedis habere  
credit adhuc iugulum, quantam pro Caesaris ipse  
auulsa ceruice daret.  
—(8.8–12)

Though he has fallen from a lofty height,  
he knows the price of his own blood is not yet cheap  
and, remembering his fate, believes that he still has  
a throat worth as much as he himself would give  
for Caesar's severed head.

These are the fears and fantasies of a now largely impotent man. Pompey knows that Caesar, according to his habit, would be perfectly willing to pay for his life. And at this moment of humiliation and defeat, he dreams of the notionally easy expedient of paying someone else to kill Caesar, effectively using Caesar's own mercenary methods against him. But his wish comes too late. This is the closest Lucan comes to having Pompey think or speak in commodity terms, but it is notable that here, as in the previous

73. Fantham 1992 ad 2.477.

74. Fantham 1992 ad 2.473.

passage, it is the narrator who speaks the words rather than Pompey himself. Lucan shows Pompey slipping into Caesar's mercantile calculation in lives out of desperation, but at the same time he moderates this aspect of Pompey's thought by mediating it through the narrator's voice.

Lucan uses two recurring images to express the extent to which Pompey is out of step with the world dominated by Caesar's mercantile values. The first is the scale imagery, which Lucan applies differently to Pompey than he does to Caesar. In contrast to Caesar's control of the scales, Pompey is always passively weighed out. So when he reluctantly agrees to give battle to Caesar at Pharsalia, Pompey speaks of his own role in a rather strange way:

prima uelim caput hoc funesti lancea belli,  
 si sine momento rerum partisque ruina  
 casurum est, feriat; neque enim uictoria Magno  
 laetior.  
 —(7.117–20)

I wish that the first lance of deadly war may strike  
 this head, if it can fall without influence upon events  
 or the ruin of our party, since victory is no more welcome  
 to Magnus.

Pompey's wish for his own destruction is awkward; he should be exhorting his followers to defeat Caesar. Stranger still, however, is the image of his head falling (*casurum*) and becoming a "weight," or, more specifically, a "weight on the scales that tips the balance" (*momento*).<sup>75</sup> Pompey's words *sine momento rerum* recall the earlier description of Curio: *momentumque fuit mutatus Curio rerum*, 4.819.<sup>76</sup> In that situation, Curio was the weight that tipped the scales in favor of Caesar. In this case, Pompey seems to imagine his own head falling on the scales, though he cannot say whether this will tip them in favor of the republican cause or not. As it turns out, his equivocation is justified. When his head does fall, the republican cause is nearly extinguished, surviving only in the leadership of Cato and in the heart of the future tyrannicide Brutus. The most significant aspect of Pompey's image of the balance, however, is that he represents him-

75. See OLD, s.v. *momentum*, 1. The fact that Pompey imagines the weapon that will kill him as a *lancea* ("spear") contributes obliquely to the image of a balance in these lines because the word so closely resembles *lances*, which refers to the pans of the balance.

76. Gagliardi 1975 ad 7.118.

self as passively weighed out, the result of which is his own destruction. The similarity to the image of Curio suggests that here too it is Caesar who puts the (human) weight on the scale to tip the balance in his favor.

The second set of commercial images that illustrate Pompey's dislocation pertains to seafaring and seaborne trade. As the narrator reminds us at Pompey's meager burial, it was Pompey who cleared the seas of pirates and made commerce safe for the world (*commercia tuta/gentibus et pauidos Cilicas maris*, 8.810–11), so it is fitting that a trader on the way to the east (*mercis mutator Eoae*, 8.854) will someday stop to visit his Egyptian grave. In his flight from Pharsalia, Pompey had even taken advantage of the safety at sea that he had created (*crederet hoc Magnus, pacem cum praestitit undis,/et sibi consultum*?, 8.256–57). Yet Pompey finds that *commercia* is of no use to him, as we see in his declaration to his comrades after Pharsalia that he will flee beyond the bounds of the world if his plans fail:

quod si nos Eoa fides et barbara fallent  
foedera, uolgati supra commercia mundi  
naufragium Fortuna ferat.  
—(8.311–13)

But if eastern loyalty and barbarian treaties  
fail us, let Fortune bear my shipwreck beyond  
the commerce of the ordinary world.

Of course, Pompey can no longer rely on the *fides* of the east any more than he can on that of Romans. The man who made the sea safe for ships imagines himself as a shipwreck. After his speech at Pharsalia, he appeared like a "sailor overcome by a storm . . . carried along like a useless weight on his ship" (*uictus uiolento nauita Coro . . . ignauum . . ./puppis onus trahitur*, 7.125–27). Civil war leads to a general shipwreck of fortunes (*naufragium*, 1.503), but not for Caesar. Although his troops suffer a momentary "shipwreck" when they are flooded in Spain (*naufraga . . . arma*, 4.87–88), he manages to master this phenomenon too: he knows his troops would come to him even at the cost of shipwreck (*naufragio*, 5.494) and himself becomes a "fortunate shipwreck" (*felix naufragus*, 5.699) after returning to Greece from his abortive boat ride to Italy. It is only Pompey's fortunes that are actually shipwrecked, so that he can at best only flee the *commercia* he enabled but that Caesar now controls.

In the altered conditions of civil war, the excess inherent in generos-

ity is transformed into waste. Caesar is too swift and calculating not to exploit Pompey's generosity, deference, and desire for adulation. Like the grand old oak laden with gift offerings to which Lucan compares him, Pompey remains to the end of the poem an infirm representative of the humane ties established through giving and receiving, so that when the narrator laments his loss, he is also mourning the decayed foundation of civilized society.

### Cato

Caesar and Pompey dominate the action of the *Civil War*, but Cato, the poem's third major figure, plays an equally important role. To be sure, his political and military achievements are limited: he collects the defeated remnants of the republican forces after Pompey's death and leads them on an ultimately futile campaign in northern Africa. Historically, Cato committed suicide in Utica rather than submit to Caesar's forces, though Lucan's poem does not reach this far. But Cato loomed larger in the Roman consciousness and has a correspondingly greater role in Lucan's epic than this outline of events suggests.

The power of Cato's example may owe something to his noble and principled defeat, which became, like the Greek loss at Thermopylae, hallowed in memory as a great lost cause.<sup>77</sup> But his posthumous reputation grew above all from his adherence to Stoic principles, particularly during the civil war: Seneca calls him a greater example of Stoic virtue than even Ulysses or Hercules.<sup>78</sup> Critics have therefore often analyzed Lucan's Cato in terms of his Stoicism, and he unquestionably has characteristics of the Stoic sage. He acts with moderation and attempts to follow the divine providence of nature (*seruare modum finemque tenere/naturamque sequi*, 2.381–82), obeying the dictates of reason rather than surrendering himself to the enticements of pleasure (*nullosque Catonis in actus/subrepsit partemque tulit sibi nata uoluptas*, 2.390–91). He also demonstrates tremendous fortitude as he leads the republican forces in Africa after the death of Pompey in Book 9. Lucan's Cato thus becomes a model of the cardinal Stoic virtues of courage, justice, moderation, and prudence.

77. Lucan first mentions Cato as the champion of the defeated when describing the clash of Caesar and Pompey: "each has on his side a great authority: the conquering cause the gods, the conquered Cato" (*magno se iudice quisque tuetur: uictrix causa deis placuit, sed uicta Catoni*, 1.126–27).

78. *Constant*. 2.1. For more on Seneca's Hercules, see Galinsky 1972, 167–84, with references on p. 168 n. 3, and more on Hercules as Stoic paragon on pp. 147–48.

Yet inconsistencies complicate this picture. How, for instance, can Cato be following the path of Stoic excellence (*uirtus*) if to do so he must commit the unjust and morally reprehensible act (*nefas*, 2.286) of involving himself in civil war?<sup>79</sup> Does Cato not fail in his own attempt to act in accord with reason if he stirs up the emotions of his interlocutor, Brutus?<sup>80</sup> Such difficulties have led some critics to see Cato as a character whose paradoxical and conflicted nature mirrors the confusion of the Roman world, at war with itself.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, there are those who locate this conflict not within the person of Cato, but in his interaction with the dysfunctional world around him. On this reading, Cato remains a true Stoic sage who simply makes the best of impossible choices.<sup>82</sup>

An alternative approach is to analyze these contradictions not solely by reference to Cato's Stoicism, but in terms of a balance between Stoicism and Romanness, because he is at least as much a Roman as a Stoic. Cato's dress (described as that of a Quiris, 2.386), his adoption of venerable Romans as his models,<sup>83</sup> his deep respect for the laws,<sup>84</sup> his self-sacrifice for Rome,<sup>85</sup> and his preference for death over subjection to tyranny all reveal the deeply Roman strain in his character.<sup>86</sup> Such values animate Cato to defend the Republic; but he is motivated to a different end by another

79. Sklenár 2003, 61–62.

80. Sklenár 2003, 72.

81. Johnson 1987, 44–46, sees Cato as a parody of the Stoic sage figure. Bartsch 1997, 119–23, who points out some of the same apparent contradictions as Sklenár, sees Cato as a paradoxical figure who chooses to fight for the Republic even though he acknowledges it is already dead (esp. p. 123). Leigh 1997 and Hershkowitz 1998 likewise discount the real virtue of Cato.

82. Narducci 2002, 383–88. So similarly Ahl 1976, 278: “the development of Cato as a Stoic *sapiens* is rhetorically and politically necessary to Lucan's theme.” Wick 2004 vol. 1, 32, also takes issue with the interpretation of Cato as conflicted or parodic, arguing that critics who take this position could just as well interpret any real sacrifice that is not rewarded as paradoxical or theatrical. D'Alessandro Behr 2007, 113–61, 171–78, has renewed the argument for Cato as Stoic sage with the claim that eclectic Roman Stoicism, drawing as it did on a variety of schools, allowed for a sage to experience some emotion.

83. 2.308, 9.190, 9.385.

84. 9.385, 9.391.

85. 2.239–40, 2.306–19, 2.388, 9.28–29.

86. 2.302–3, 2.318–19, 9.29–30, 9.256–62, 9.379–80, 9.567; Syndikus 1958, 98–101. Bartsch 1997, 118, explicitly acknowledges the importance of Cato's Roman dimension. Fantham 1992 ad 2.240–41 addresses both sides of Cato when she writes of “the conflict between the Roman commitment to public service and the inherited Stoic rejection of emotional involvement.” Sklenár 2003, 61, similarly describes the opposed needs for self-sufficiency and aid to others as a “Stoic/Roman duality” in Cato. Ahl 1976, 244 n. 15 thus decides against either the thoroughly philosophical readings of Marti 1945 and Brisset 1964, on the one hand, and readings such as those of Syndikus 1958 and Due 1962, who would deny any consistent and significant philosophical perspectives in the poem, on the other.



central Roman virtue: frugality. Understanding Cato's particular frugality will help explain certain of his otherwise puzzling features, including the fact that, despite his obvious virtues, Cato is never called *pius* or said to possess *pietas*,<sup>87</sup> terms Lucan uses often for Pompey. It will also allow us to see how Cato represents an ultimately futile attempt on Lucan's part to find a socioeconomic model to replace that of the failed Republic.

We see this frugality in the fullest account of Cato's character, discussed briefly above, which Lucan provides just after Cato is reunited with his former wife, Marcia:

hi mores, haec duri inmoti Catonis  
secta fuit, servare modum finemque tenere  
naturamque sequi patriaeque impendere uitam  
nec sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.  
huic epulae uicisse famem, magnique penates  
summouisse hiemem tecto, pretiosaue uestis  
hirtam membra super Romani more Quiritis  
induxisse togam, Veneris quoque maximus usus  
progenies: urbi pater est urbique maritus,  
iustitiae cultor, rigidi seruator honesti,  
in commune bonus; nullosque Catonis in actus  
subrepsit partemque tulit sibi nata uoluptas.  
—(2.380–91)

This was the character and this the unswerving creed  
of austere Cato: to observe moderation, to hold to the goal,  
to follow nature, to devote his life to his country,  
to believe that he was born not for himself but for all the world.  
In his eyes to conquer hunger was a feast, to ward off winter  
with a roof was a mighty palace, and to draw across  
his limbs the rough toga in the manner of the Roman citizen of old  
was a precious robe, and the greatest use of Venus  
was offspring: for Rome he is father and for Rome he is husband,  
keeper of justice and guardian of strict morality,  
his goodness was for the state; into none of Cato's acts  
did self-centered pleasure creep in and take a share.

87. Ahl 1976, 276, makes this observation. I discuss his explanation below.

Certain aspects of this description emphasize the importance of restraint as part of Cato's Stoic principles. Cato stays within a fixed limit (*seruare modum*), seeks the proper goal (*tenere finem*), follows the dictates of nature and the reason it represents (*naturam sequi*), and is swayed by no pleasure (*nullos . . . in actus . . . uoluptas*). These traits describe a individual self-sufficient in fulfilling his own purpose (cf. 2.241, *securum sui*). Yet Cato also believes he must serve the world (*sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo*). This belief seems to echo the Stoic principle of *oikeiosis*, which says that mortals have a natural affinity for others as well as for themselves and that it is natural to act upon it.<sup>88</sup> Within Cato's character lies the Stoic tension between individual self-sufficiency and obligations toward the general welfare, or, in other words, the question of whether a wise man would participate in politics (*sitne sapientis ad rem publicam accedere*), much debated in antiquity and much discussed in the analysis of Lucan's Cato.<sup>89</sup>

Lucan balances these Stoic features with traditionally Roman traits. These represent a desire to work specifically for the Roman community. His apparently Stoic dedication to the universal good (*in commune bonus*) manifests itself as a readiness to "spend" his life for his country (*patriaeque impendere uitam*) and in his role as father and husband for Rome (*urbi pater est urbique maritus*), and his dedication to the common good (*in commune bonus*).<sup>90</sup> Just as Cato's service to others has a distinctively Roman side, so too does his personal behavior. Roman Stoics practiced a certain asceticism, but Cato exceeds these norms in his preference for very simple food, shelter, and clothing, and his view that the "only use of sex was procreation" (*Veneris quoque maximus usus/progenies*).<sup>91</sup> Implicit in his more severe ethic is the notion that one should demand from one's environment and from others the minimum necessary to live well. Thus, just as Cato represents the conflict between Stoic imperatives for personal

88. Rist 1969, 70–71, has brief observations on this concept, more fully explored by Engberg-Pedersen 1990. George 1988 gives an overview of *oikeiosis* as pertains to Lucan, arguing specifically that Lucan casts Caesar as a Stoic fool.

89. Williams 2003, 7–10, provides a useful overview of the question in its historical context. On this dilemma as embodied by Lucan's Cato, see Ahl 1976, 236–40; George 1991; Fantham 1992 ad 2.323–25; Bartsch 1997, 117–18; and Narducci 2002, 370–83, who notes (p. 370) that this topic was a frequent subject of declamation.

90. This last could equally well be read as a Stoic or Roman imperative.

91. Cato's Stoic excesses are pointed out by Sklenár 2003, 78. Fantham 1992 ad loc. follows the argument of Håkanson 1979, 29–30, "that *maximus usus* means the total or limit of use," as opposed to Bentley and Housman, "who interpreted *maximus* as 'the most important purpose of sex.'"

tranquillity and service to others, he also presents a Roman model of limited personal self-fulfillment, which is in tension with the imperative to serve the Republic.

### *Frugality and the Independent Roman Household*

The conceptual basis for the ideal of minimal economic exchange and social commitment lies in the primary Roman economic unit, the household headed by the *paterfamilias*. Lucan's readers would have been steeped in these values and familiar with their relevance to the historical younger Cato. To truly understand Lucan's Cato, therefore, and through him Lucan's ultimate stance on the socioeconomic values appropriate for his day, we must first investigate the values that emanate from the Roman household and their connection with the historical younger Cato.

Scholars of exchange relations have not yet explored the socioeconomic semantics of the Roman household as thoroughly as they have the significance of the Athenian household, so it will be helpful to briefly review the Athenian parallels before returning to Rome. In fifth- and fourth-century Athens, the *oikos* was seen among antidemocratic politicians as the "metaphysical and political source of power and prosperity," a view generally shared by Plato.<sup>92</sup> Xenophon's treatise on household management makes it plain that Athenian aristocrats took the independent household to be the fundamental site of economic activity and self-determination. One corollary of this emphasis was the political view that the city was the site of corrupt and wasteful exchange, to be avoided when possible. Thus, although the typical head of the household supports, and wishes to direct, the political enterprise of the *polis*, he seeks minimal, efficient engagement without entangling obligations.<sup>93</sup>

Roman culture presents clear parallels to these Athenian values. Romans habitually looked to their great ancestors as models for behavior, or *exempla*.<sup>94</sup> Among the greatest of these were Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who achieved great military victories but then returned straightaway to his plow, and Manius Curius Dentatus, who abandoned a distinguished political career at the height of his influence to work his small farm. Cincinnatus and Dentatus were centrally concerned with the main-

92. Von Reden 1995, 131.

93. Von Reden 1995, 131–35. Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1256a14–58b6, where he says that it is natural for the household to be self-sufficient to the extent possible. For more on Aristotle's conception of the household as the foundation of the *polis*, see Nagle 2006, 152–76.

94. Roller 2004.

tenance of their households but took the measures necessary to preserve the Republic so that such households could thrive.<sup>95</sup> Varro's treatise on estate management, *De Re Rustica*, presents a perspective similar to that of his Greek predecessor Xenophon. Varro takes the medium-sized villa estate, such as a typical wealthy Roman might possess, as the norm for agricultural production at a time when large-scale estate farming was an equally viable model in Italy, thus reflecting and promoting the ideal of the independent household. And it is the younger Cato's great-grandfather Cato the Censor who in his treatise on agriculture, *De Agri Cultura*, gives fullest expression to the ideal of the individual Roman household as a political and economic unit, enjoining efficiency above all.<sup>96</sup>

This strain of socioeconomic thought persists in the generation of Cato the Censor's great-grandson. Although Cicero does not himself subscribe to it, he presents a life of detached self-sufficiency through thrifty estate management as a legitimate choice for men of means at *On Duties* 1.92, as discussed in the introduction. However, when the younger Cato brings the frugality of the individual household wholesale into contemporary affairs of state and neglects reciprocity, Cicero strongly objects:

potest autem ulli imperio, quod gloria debet fultum esse et benevolentia sociorum, utile esse odium et infamia? ego etiam cum Catone meo saepe dissensi. nimis mihi praefracte uidebatur aerarium uestigaliaque defendere, omnia publicanis negare, multa sociis, cum in hos benefici esse deberemus, cum illis sic agere, ut cum colonis nostris soleremus, eoque magis, quod illa ordinum coniunctio ad salutem rei publicae pertinebat. male etiam Curio, cum causam Transpadanorum aequam esse dicebat, semper autem addebat "uincat utilitas." potius doceret non esse aequam, quia non esset utilis rei publicae, quam, cum utilem non esse diceret, esse aequam fateretur. (*Off.* 3.88)

Furthermore, can hatred and shame be expedient for any government? For government ought to be founded upon fair fame and the loyalty

95. Reay 2005, 333. Cicero, in his *De Senectute* 16.55–56, has the elder Cato speak nostalgically of Cincinnatus.

96. Even advising the sale of old slaves who are no longer productive (*Agr.* 2). Thus von Albrecht 1997 1:395, 403, writes that the elder Cato not only was one of the "fathers of Roman 'capitalism,'" but also "sacrificed humanity to economics." In order to reconcile such frugality with the norms of aristocratic generosity, Cato even blurs the line between commodity and reciprocal language, transforming the concept of *existimatio* from commercial evaluation to proper aristocratic appreciation (Habinek 1998, 45–50).

of allies. On this point I often disagreed even with my friend Cato; it seemed to me that he was too rigorous in his watchful care over the claims of the treasury and the revenues; he refused everything that the farmers of the revenue asked for and much that the allies desired; whereas, as I insisted, it was our duty to be generous to the allies and to treat the publicans as we were accustomed individually to treat our tenants—and all the more, because harmony between the orders was essential to the welfare of the republic. A Curio, too, was wrong, when he pleaded that the demands of the people beyond the Po were just, but never failed to add, “Let expediency prevail.” He ought rather to have proved that the claims were not just, because they were not expedient for the republic, than to have admitted that they were just, when, as he maintained, they were not expedient.

Cicero’s “farmers of the revenue” refers to an event recounted by Plutarch. As noted in the introduction, when the younger Cato was given the job of selling off the goods of the dead King Ptolemy of Cyprus for the benefit of the Roman state, he trusted no intermediaries, but auctioned them himself for the highest price. In doing so, Cato alienated some of his friends who could have profited from the transactions.<sup>97</sup> Cicero objects because he believes that harmony among the orders results from generous giving between the highest Roman magistrates and the publicans of the equestrian class, as well as between Rome and its allies. For Cicero, these exchanges assure goodwill, but Cato nevertheless demands a strict accounting. In Cicero’s view, the catchphrase he attributes to Curio, *utilitas uincat*, serves for Cato as well: both overlook the need for generosity from the treasury to ensure the loyalty of those outside the senatorial elite.

Plutarch recounts several anecdotes that show Cato adhering to these same values. When Cato inherited a hundred talents, he allowed any of his friends to make use of it without collecting interest (6). He reformed the office of quaestor, collecting and repaying the state’s debts vigorously (17). While in this office, he also closely monitored the Senate’s use of debts, taxes, and gifts, and he continued to do so even after giving up the magistracy (18). He was greatly vexed when the account books from his Cyprian transaction were destroyed (38), and as praetor he took pains to suppress bribery (44). In Utica after the defeat of Pompey and Scipio, Cato found that his Roman allies there were largely money changers, whom he persuaded at first to continue fighting but who eventually deserted because

97. Caesar wrote bitterly of this event in his *Anti-Cato* (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 36).

they were too fickle (59, 61).<sup>98</sup> Cato was distinguished from the money changers by his constancy. They wavered in their allegiance, presumably because they could not decide which course of action would give them the greatest advantage. Cato, by contrast, remained committed to what he knew to be the right course of action.

Cato refused to give or receive gifts, a practice unheard of among Roman elites. When foreign cities and kings wanted to send money in honor of his brother's funeral, Cato rejected them: he accepted incense and decorations, but then sent payment for them to the givers.<sup>99</sup> When Cato was attacked by Pompey's agent, Clodius, he defended himself by comparing his behavior with that of Pompey himself. Cato observed that he had declined a province after his praetorship, but that Pompey accepted provinces on behalf of both himself and others. Furthermore, Pompey had lent two legions to Caesar without the approval of either the people or the Senate, leading Cato to conclude that great armies and weapons and horses had become the gifts of private individuals.<sup>100</sup> Sallust contrasts Cato with Caesar on just this point of giving gifts and favors:

igitur eis genus, aetas, eloquentia prope aequalia fuere, magnitudo animi par, item gloria, sed alia alii. Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur, integritate uitae Cato. ille mansuetudine et misericordia clarus factus, huic seueritas dignitatem addiderat. Caesar dando, subleuando, ignoscendo, Cato nihil largiundo gloriam adeptus est. In altero miseris perfugium erat, in altero malis perniciēs. illius facilitas, huius constantia laudabatur. Postremo Caesar in animum induxerat laborare, uigilare; negotiis amicorum intentus sua negligere, nihil denegare, quod dono dignum esset; sibi magnum imperium, exercitum, bellum nouum exoptabat, ubi uirtus enitescere posset. at Catoni studium modestiae, decoris, sed maxime seueritatis erat; non diuitiis cum diuite neque factione cum factioso, sed cum strenuo uirtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat, esse

98. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 46 tells the story of how Cato, taking charge of the office of *aedile* for his friend Favonius, rewarded winning actors with crowns not of gold, as had been the previous practice, but of wild olive, like those given at Olympia, and other inexpensive gifts. To the Greeks he gave beets, lettuce, radishes, and pears; to the Romans jars of wine, pork, figs, melons, and kindling.

99. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 11.

100. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 45. In another instance recounted by Plutarch, Deiotarus the Galatian in his old age tried with persistent gifts to entrust his children to Cato; Cato refused and sent back all the gifts, not allowing even his friends to take those Deiotarus had sent for them (15).

quam uideri bonus malebat: ita, quo minus petebat gloriam, eo magis illum sequebatur. (*Bellum Catilinae* 54)

In their birth, then, in years and eloquence, they were about equal; in greatness of soul they were evenly matched, and likewise in renown, although the renown of each was different. Caesar was held great because of his benefactions and lavish generosity, Cato for the uprightness of his life. The former became famous for his gentleness and compassion, the austerity of the latter had brought him prestige. Caesar gained glory by giving, helping, and forgiving; Cato by never stooping to bribery. One was a refuge for the unfortunate, the other a scourge for the wicked. The good nature of the one was applauded, the steadfastness of the other. Finally, Caesar had schooled himself to work hard and sleep little, to devote himself to the welfare of his friends and neglect his own, to refuse nothing which was worth the giving. He longed for great power, an army, a new war to give scope for his brilliant merit. Cato, on the contrary, cultivated self-control, propriety, but above all austerity. He did not vie with the rich in riches nor in intrigue with the intriguer, but with the active in good works, with the self-restrained in moderation, with the blameless in integrity. He preferred to be, rather than to seem, virtuous; hence the less he sought fame, the more it pursued him.<sup>101</sup>

Caesar was following and exceeding the standard practice of giving gifts and bribes to win office and gain favor as a magistrate.<sup>102</sup> Sallust emphasizes that Cato gave and received nothing whenever possible and was marked above all by abstention (*abstinentia*) from these social norms as well as anything beyond what seemed strictly necessary.

From these episodes in Cato's life, the picture emerges of a man who rejects reciprocity in favor of a commitment to the thorough and careful calculation of expenses for the benefit of the Republic. Plutarch says it is as manifestly implausible to accuse Cato of profit seeking (*aischrokerdeian*) as to accuse Hercules of cowardice.<sup>103</sup> Plutarch's comment reveals that others saw Cato's actions as mercenary, but he does not share this view. Rather, Cato rejects the ordinary norms of reciprocity advocated by Cicero because he be-

101. Text and translation from 1931 Loeb edition of J. C. Rolfe.

102. As remarked by Plut., *Cat. Min.* 47, who speaks of these as necessary, *δωροδοκίας καὶ δεκασμοῖς*. He also makes a similar contrast between Cato and Caesar (*Cat. Min.* 49).

103. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 53.

believes that the state is guided best by an arrangement under which each gets exactly his due measure, with minimal outstanding personal obligations.

### *Utilitas*

Lucan was well aware of the socioeconomic ideals of the younger Cato: throughout the epic Cato's frugality is evident, not least in his modest dress and eating habits (2.383–86). Lucan, like Plutarch, distinguishes Cato's unselfish motives from a mercenary desire for profit.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, Cato himself associates Caesar with pure profit seeking: when Cato faces down a rebellion of his forces, he challenges them to take his head to Caesar for a "reward" (*mercede, pretio*, 9.279–81). Like Sallust, Lucan compares the socioeconomic values of Cato and Caesar, though implicitly. When Caesar sacks the Roman treasury for war funds, the narrator describes the temple as housing all the riches saved up by "the values of our thrifty ancestors" (*parcorum mores . . . auorum*, 3.161). He then proceeds to list among the contents of the treasury the wealth that Cato brought back from Cyprus (*quod Cato longiqua uexit super aequora Cypro*, 3.164). While disparaging Caesar with this contrast, Lucan associates Cato with Rome's pristine and frugal ancestors, suggesting that Lucan, unlike Cicero, approves of Cato's thrift.<sup>105</sup> In general, Cato declares his willingness to make great expenditures in the exercise of virtue (*magno constat*, 9.402–4), while Caesar accumulates wealth to advance his personal goals.

Unlike Caesar, who can rejoice in the shedding of blood (2.439–40), Cato yields to no selfish pleasure (*nullosque Catonis in actus/subrepsit partemque tulit sibi nata uoluptas*, 2.390–91).<sup>106</sup> He is entirely free of *incontinentia*, adhering instead to a notion of utility in seeking that which is virtuous, as when he speaks of procreation as the sole "use" (*usus*, 2.387) of sexual intercourse. Although Cato has reservations about Pompey's behavior, he nevertheless praises him for his instrumental value in aiding

104. Fantham 1992 ad 2.254.

105. Cato later travels through African regions where Hercules is said to have robbed the "prize" (*abstulit . . . pretium*, 9.365) of the golden apples from their tree to give them to King Eurystheus from Argos (*Argolico . . . tyranno*, 9.367) and free himself from service. Wick 2004 ad 9.348–67 § 4 observes, *contra* Ahl 1976, 260–61, that although Cato could be considered to be following Hercules as a Stoic model, Lucan does little to suggest this connection. Cato does not participate in such economies of theft or payment for freedom, even in exigent circumstances: he will not even take water from a subordinate in the desert (9.398–402).

106. Brouwers 1989, 51 n. 10, notes several instances of his *abstinentia*: 9.505–10, 9.587–93, 9.881–89.



the cause of the Republic, calling him "useful at this time" (*in hoc tamen utilis aeuo*).<sup>107</sup>

Cato is the only major figure in the poem to use the word *utilis*, evidently an important concept in his value system. Elsewhere in the poem, the word *utilis* generally has negative connotations, as when the narrator describes the war as "useful" (*utile*, 1.182) to those seeking to profit by it, or in Pothinus's declaration that there is a great difference between what is useful and what is just (*sidera terra/ut distant et flamma mari, sic utile recto*, 8.487–88).<sup>108</sup> Here, *utilis* signifies the pure quest for individual profit or advantage. Cato's view shares this principle of close reckoning but is directed toward the ends of preserving the tradition of Rome in the minimalist form espoused by the historical younger Cato. In these terms, he also subscribes to the dictum Cicero attributes to Curio in the passage cited above: *utilitas uincat*.<sup>109</sup>

In contrast to both Caesar and Pompey, Cato has no involvement in any gift relationship in the poem. Indeed, Cato's only references to gift giving are contemptuously ironic. He refers sarcastically to Ptolemy's murder of Pompey as his "gift" (*munus*, 9.268) to the Roman soldiery, because it enables them to realize that they are fighting for themselves rather than for their general. And he muses aloud that these remnants of Pompey's army might try to outdo Ptolemy's gift to Caesar by betraying Cornelia and Pompey's sons to Caesar as a gift of their own (*munus*, 9.278). The closest Cato comes to a reciprocal relationship (apart from the special case of Marcia, which I discuss below) is his wish that he could perform a ritual sacrifice of his life (*deuotio*) to preserve the Republic. Yet even the *deuotio* takes the form of a commodity contract, with specific obligations for both the mortal and the divinities to whom he appeals. Cato speaks of the *deuotio* using the commodity terms *redimat* ("to pay for," 2.312), *luatur* ("to be

107. Lucan contrasts Cato's view with that of Pompey by prefacing the eulogy with the comment that the mourners' curses upon the gods for Pompey's death were no more gratifying (*gratius*, 9.186) to him than the speech of Cato. The word *gratus* commonly means just "pleasing," but there is a hint of its underlying idea of *gratia* in the contrast with the words of Cato that follow. Cato would see his speech as one that was useful and necessary; Pompey would interpret it as a generous gesture.

108. The two other uses of the word *utilis* in the poem are both in the voice of the narrator, who speaks of horses as "not useful" (*non utile*, 4.268) to men under siege and of the example of the conqueror Alexander as "not useful" (*non utile*, 10.26) to the world.

109. Sklenár 2003, 61 n. 4, observes that "Cato's economy is as compatible with orthodox Stoicism as with Roman conservatism: he lives modestly not because he abhors wealth but because, true to Stoic doctrine, he has not striven to acquire it. Further, his Roman conservatism would yield a contempt not so much for wealth itself as for ostentatious and wasteful displays of wealth: luxury, not prosperity, is sinful in the eyes of the *vir bonus* of the old type."

paid," 2.312), and *pendere* ("to pay," 2.313). But having domesticated the reciprocal gesture with his commodity vocabulary, Cato takes the further utilitarian step of abandoning his proposed *deuotio* on the grounds that it will accomplish nothing (2.306–23). Lucan also signals Cato's reluctance to be involved in exchange negatively. The poet refrains from associating him with scale imagery in any substantial way as he does the two other protagonists.<sup>110</sup> It is Caesar rather than Cato who holds the scales of commerce.

Cato's lack of participation in reciprocity, consistent with his historical behavior, explains why Lucan neither refers to him as *pious* nor associates him with *pietas* despite his defense of Roman ideals and the precedent of Aeneas as *pious* epic protagonist. Ahl offers two possible reasons for this omission. Lucan's wish to attribute *uirtus* to Cato as a Stoic *sapiens* may exclude mention of *pietas* because "the difference between *pietas* and *uirtus*, from a Stoic point of view, is the difference between unquestioning dedication to the *mores maiorum* and conscious, intellectual commitment to what is good."<sup>111</sup> The difficulty with this explanation is that when he decides to join the war, Cato acts precisely out of an "unquestioning dedication to the *mores maiorum*," rather than an "intellectual commitment to what is good"; once again his motives are Roman as well as Stoic. Ahl also suggests that Lucan may have been reluctant to associate Cato with figures who had appropriated *pietas* as a signal quality but could be seen as having abused power to the detriment of Rome, including Aeneas himself, the younger Pompeys, and Octavian. Yet this reasoning overlooks a more fundamental explanation. In sharp contrast to Pompey, as well as to Vergil's *pious* Aeneas, Cato simply does not participate in the reciprocal relationships that constitute the active practice of *pietas*.

The major exception to this rule seems to be Cato's devotion to Rome itself. He is said to have become a father or husband for the city (*urbi pater est urbiq;ue maritus*, 2.388).<sup>112</sup> This expression helps account for his decision to participate in the war: more than a choice determined by perfect Stoic rationality, it is one made from belief and commitment to the cause

110. The two instances in which Lucan associates Cato with balance imagery are incidental. The narrator informs us that while the outcome of the conflict between Caesar and Pompey still "hung in the balance" (*ubi pendebant casus*, 9.19), Cato disliked Pompey, but after Pharsalia he became a full Pompeian (*pectore toto/Pompeianus erat*, 9.23–24). He subsequently comes to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, where, with the sun overhead, "the day stood in perfect balance" (*stat librata dies*, 9.529).

111. Quotation and the two arguments from Ahl 1976, 276.

112. This is the translation of Sklenár 2003, 74 n. 31. Alternatively, Ahl 1976, 247–52, reads this phrase as meaning that Cato was a father and husband *to* the city. This reading would make my point still more strongly.

of Rome. But it is significant that Cato's relationship with Rome is figured through reference to the roles of father and husband, key descriptors for the head of a Roman household. Lucan establishes this association between Cato and the household in two earlier scenes. We first encounter Caesar and Pompey on campaign,<sup>113</sup> but we meet Cato in his own home when Brutus comes to consult him about the war:

atria cognati pulsat non ampla Catonis.  
 inuenit insomni uoluentem publica cura  
 fata uirum casusque urbis cunctisque timentem  
 securumque sui.  
 —(2.238–41)

He knocked at the modest house of his kinsman, Cato.  
 He found the great man in sleepless worry pondering  
 the nation's fate, the plight of Rome, alarmed for all  
 without thought of himself.

Our introduction to Cato begins with the word *atria*, which refers to his house. Cato's name follows as dependent, grammatically and conceptually, upon his household.<sup>114</sup> The humility of Cato's home makes him the sole remaining exemplar of an ideal whose loss the narrator had lamented in the previous book:

fecunda uirorum  
 paupertas fugitur totoque accersitur orbe  
 quo gens quaeque perit; tum longos iungere fines  
 agrorum, et quondam duro sulcata Camilli  
 uomere et antiquos Curiorum passa ligones  
 longa sub ignotis extendere rura colonis.  
 —(1.165–70)

Warrior-bearing  
 poverty they shun, and from all the world import  
 the bane of every nation; next their fields' boundaries  
 they prolonged and joined, and under unknown tenant-farmers

113. Caesar, 1.183; Pompey, 2.527. All three are mentioned by line 1.128, but we do not witness them speaking and acting there.

114. Sklenár 2003, 61–62.

they stretched out far the lands once plowed by the hard share  
of Camillus and worked by the ancient spades of the Curii.

Cato is the only major character seen in his own home. Brutus's late-night visit requires that Cato be found in his city house, but the simplicity of his household recalls the thrift of the farms worked by great Romans of earlier generations, such as Camillus and the Curiones. Cato proceeds to discuss with Brutus in Stoic terms his decision to enter the war, but this discussion is framed and bounded by references to this household.

Cato is thus rooted in the traditions of Roman household economy in a way that Pompey and Caesar are not. Indeed, when compared to Cato, both Caesar and Pompey seem alienated from Italy, because they neither speak of their homes nor appear in any domestic setting. In fact, it is Cato himself who refers in his eulogy of Pompey to the great man's household. He describes it as pure, lacking in luxury, and uncorrupted by Pompey's success (*casta domus luxuque carens corruptaque numquam/fortuna domini*, 9.201–2). Pompey's home is neither so humble as the homes of Cato and Rome's early leaders, nor is it extravagant. Cato measures the man by his household, his central point of reference for Roman identity.

Apart from Cato's discussion with Brutus, his encounter with Marcia (2.326–91) best illustrates the life of his household. Marcia was Cato's wife until he lent her to his friend Hortensius to bear children. She returns to marry Cato again at his home in a wedding free of any material sign of pleasure or joy, with no relatives to witness the event (*pignora nulla domus, nulli coiere propinqui*, 2.370) and only Brutus to officiate. The scene has been interpreted as an allegory of the exhausted Republic (Marcia) reunited with republican ideals (Cato).<sup>115</sup> But the fact that Marcia returns to the wedding from being loaned to Hortensius limits the scope of this allegory, for it is difficult to see how we can read Cato as having given away the Republic only to have it return to him.

To better understand the significance of this scene, we must begin with this problematic exchange:

quondam uirgo toris melioris iuncta mariti,  
mox, ubi conubii *pretium mercesque* soluta est  
tertia iam suboles, alios fecunda penates

115. Ahl 1976, 249, on 2.387–90: "Cato's reunion with Marcia is indeed an allegory. The republic, worn out and no longer productive, will be reunited with the man who is the embodiment of the ideals upon which it is founded." Sklenár 2003, 74 n. 31, disputes this interpretation.

inpletura datur geminas et sanguine matris  
 permixtura domos.  
 —(2.329–33)

Once, as a virgin, she was joined in marriage to a better husband;  
 soon the reward of marriage, a third  
 child now, was paid as a fee and, pregnant, she is given  
 to fill another home with offspring, to ally the two houses  
 with her mother's blood.

Ahl writes that "it is hard for the modern reader to comprehend, much less sympathize with, Cato's attitude to Marcia which resembles that of a farmer to a good breeding cow. But clearly Lucan comprehends and expects his reader to do so."<sup>116</sup> In fact, many in Lucan's audience would also likely have found his treatment of Marcia questionable. Whether Cato was right to use Marcia this way became a topic of declamation.<sup>117</sup> Caesar in his *Anti-Cato* attacked the dead Cato's reputation fiercely on this point, accusing him of giving Marcia to Hortensius in exchange for an inheritance,<sup>118</sup> part of a broader charge of mercenary behavior. Lucan seems to invite just such criticism by describing Marcia's bearing of Cato's children with the phrase *pretium mercesque*. According to Fantham, this phrase is "apparently duplicated, [but] the nouns contrast childbirth as the price she paid for marriage and as the reward it offered her husband."<sup>119</sup> As we have seen, the words *pretium* and *merces* generally have a negative cast in the poem.<sup>120</sup> Likewise, the only other use of the phrase *pretium mercesque* is

116. Ahl 1976, 247 n. 19.

117. Quint. *Inst.* 3.5, cited in Narducci 2002, 375.

118. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 53, cited in Narducci 2002, 375. Further references at Harich-Graz 1990, 214 n. 10.

119. Fantham 1992 ad loc. Harich-Graz 1990 sees the phrase as merely indicating that the marriage was directed toward productive procreation rather than pleasure.

120. Examples, some of which have been considered above, include the narrator's statement toward the opening of the poem that the state was so corrupt that the *fasces*, the symbols of imperial authority, were sold for a *pretium* (1.178). Brutus tells Cato that the *pretium* for his entry into the war will be that he is made guilty, while others already were so (2.258). Caesar's men raid the defeated republican camp seeking the *pretium* for their crimes (7.750). Cato uses the word *pretium* ironically to describe the reward that republican soldiers could receive for betraying him to Caesar (9.781). Rome is a *merces* for Marius (2.227). Brutus tells Cato before Marcia arrives that the soldiers on both sides go to war for *mercede*, or gain, rather than to serve a good cause (2.255), and Caesar tells his soldiers after their victory that they should collect the *merces pro sanguine*, or "wages for the blood they have spilled" (7.738). In the same speech in which he uses the word *pretium*, Cato challenges the loyalty of his troops by telling

one where both ideas are disparaged: the Pompeian general Petreius says that he will never take his life and those of his troops as the *pretium mercesque* of foul treason (4.220).

Given that Cato seems to embody certain republican ideals, why leave him open to this charge? Because this is Plutarch's Cato, not Caesar's. Read in the context of Cato's economic behavior both throughout the poem and historically, this phrase suggests the principled Cato is concerned not with gain, but simply with maximum utility in his household and in his interpersonal relationships.<sup>121</sup> Cato's grant of Marcia to Hortensius seems to have a reciprocal aspect in that it resembles an ordinary marriage bond created between Roman families, except of course that here it is the wife in the household rather than a daughter who is given away. Furthermore, it is unusual from the perspective of ordinary formal patterns of gift exchange in that the same gift is returned by the receiver. Romans did not give back the exact same gift they received unless they were rejecting it, because an exchange of identical items necessarily takes the commodity form of exchange for precisely equivalent value.<sup>122</sup> Even the payment of an ordinary interest-free loan among friends was often accompanied by a gesture of goodwill.<sup>123</sup> But in any case Cato's grant of Marcia does not take the form of a loan, because its material benefit accrues entirely to the receiver, Hortensius, who fathers children with Marcia. On the other hand, the transfer does have some formal features of a gift exchange: Cato gives Marcia gratuitously, that is, with no expectation of return, and the exchange creates a bond with Hortensius, embodied in his children.

In sum, this is Cato's unique form of gift exchange, where he gives

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them that they could get a great *mercede*, or reward, from Caesar for his head (9.280). The Italians disgracefully import the asp into their country as a *mercem* (presumably for poisoning, 9.707). The word *merces* is even associated with the Egyptian people, who say that whatever brings profit is right (*ibi fas, ubi proxima merces*, 10.408).

121. Armisen-Marchetti 2003, 252–53, also observes that the exchange of Marcia itself is consonant with both Roman and Stoic values, according to which the greatest goal of matrimony was childbearing.

122. Sen. *Ben.* 4.40.4: *reiciendi genus est protinus aliud in uicem mittere et munus munere expungere*. Bourdieu 1977, 6–7: "In every society it may be observed that, if it is not to constitute an insult, the counter-gift must be *deferred* and *different*, because the immediate return of an exactly identical object clearly amounts to a refusal. . . . To betray one's haste to be free of an obligation one has incurred, and thus to reveal too overtly one's desire to pay off services rendered or gifts received, so as to be quits, is to denounce the initial gift retrospectively as motivated by the intention of obliging one."

123. Verboven 2002, 177–82, writes of the importance of *gratia* to both commercial loans and those among *amici*.

a gift that is not a gift, but rather something (or, in this case, someone) maximally useful, yielding a gain for a friend without any loss to himself. Yet this transaction nevertheless produces a social bond just as a reciprocal exchange would. Cato's grant of Marcia to Hortensius thus represents the perfect realization of his principle of *utilitas*, under which the careful and minimal use of resources both strengthens the individual household and knits the Roman community together to the extent necessary at the level of households (*geminas . . . domos*, 2.332–33). Lucan embellishes this picture of a successful Catonian economy by altering one historical detail: in reality, Marcia never bore any children to Hortensius.<sup>124</sup> Their fictional offspring in the *Civil War* represent the gain to be had from Cato's *utilitas*, a virtuous form of the merchant's interest.<sup>125</sup>

This insight into Cato's domestic relationship with Marcia helps us to better understand what it would mean for Cato to be called a "parent" or "husband" for Rome. Just as he is committed to the principle of utility even in his relationship with Marcia, so he is in his relationship with Rome: his involvement with both is strictly defined by the good that he thinks he can achieve with them. This observation in turn brings us to the question of Cato's decision to join the war. Cato tells Brutus that the virtue of the good man will follow confidently wherever the fates should drag it: *quo fata trahunt, uirtus secura sequetur*, 2.287. This is a traditional Stoic maxim, but with one apparently false note: a formulation consistent with Stoic doctrine would have the fates leading rather than dragging the practitioner of *uirtus*, since he in all ways acts willingly in accord with fate, the plan of the divine rationality that guides the universe.<sup>126</sup> In Stoic terms, his reluctance could be caused by his perceived inability to remedy the corruption of the state.<sup>127</sup> Yet even in these circumstances a Stoic should submit to the will of fate.

But, as we have seen, Cato's character does not begin and end with his

124. Fantham 1992 ad 2.326–80 addresses the historical background of this episode.

125. An idea native to antiquity, in that the Greek word for interest is the same as for human offspring, *τόκος*.

126. Fantham 1992 ad 2.285 gives the dictum of Cleanthes cited by Seneca *Ep.* 107.11: *ducunt uolentem fata, nolentem trahunt*. She explains Lucan's choice as metrically convenient (*trāhunt* in place of *dūcunt*) and Ovidian (citing *Met.* 7.816 and *Pont.* 6.51). But we must assume that Lucan could have found a way to use the spondee *dūcunt* had he wished to.

127. Williams 2003, 7–10, discusses the three conditions under which the *sapiens* will not participate in public affairs, as seen in Seneca's works: when he is too ill, when there is no scope for the exercise of his virtue, or when the Republic is too corrupt.

Stoicism. He is reluctant to join the war, even though the fates seem to require it, because he adheres to a principle of *utilitas*. He finds no way to be *utilis* to the Republic and so sees no point in moving beyond the home where Brutus finds him. Yet Cato cannot preserve that household without working toward the common good (*in commune bonus*, 2.390) of Rome. The dilemma he faces is thus not only a Stoic one, but also one that requires him to assess the line between commitments to his independent household and the greater Republic which helps secure its well-being. Cato goes to war unwillingly because his commitment to Stoic virtue, one part of which calls for his participation in the state, is at odds with the impossibility, in rational Stoic terms, of effecting change. But he is also torn between his commitment to the joint enterprise of Rome and his impulse to consider only what he could actually achieve for the welfare of his household.

### Conclusions

Cato's socioeconomic disposition not only shapes his character but also embodies a distinctive socioeconomic ideal.<sup>128</sup> In economic terms, Pompey represents the republican system of reciprocity as it was supposed to function—he is still imbued with the *fides* that has become nothing but a liability in the time of civil war. Caesar stands for a second, mercantile system of values that exploits the weaknesses in reciprocal ties. Receiving Pompey's head as a gift and reckoning its cost, he defeats his adversary and topples the structure of republican reciprocal arrangements from within. The atavistic Cato represents, in this respect as in others, a return to a pristine Roman order.<sup>129</sup> He fights for *libertas*,<sup>130</sup> but this ideal is not synonymous with the Republic represented by Pompey. Instead, the household will once again reassert itself as the primary, self-sufficient economic and political locus,<sup>131</sup> and there will be a minimum of the reciprocal exchange so liable to corruption: no Curios, no Caesars, not even any Pompeys.<sup>132</sup>

128. Ahl 1976, 252: "The amoral Caesar does not grasp the importance of the ideal and the abstract as Cato does. But clearly Lucan perceives it. For the disappearance of such abstract moral principle is, in Lucan's view, fundamental to the disintegration of the Roman world."

129. Syndikus 1958, 100.

130. I agree with George 1991 and Bartsch 1997, 129, that Cato is fighting for this ideal, not setting out to undermine his own enterprise as Sklenár 2003, 85, argues.

131. Bartsch 1997, 35, writes that Cato stands for the principle of boundary maintenance. On economic self-sufficiency as an ideal in the ancient world see Finley 1999, 36.

132. Feeney 1991, 292, writes in a related way but more generally of how the desuetude of the religious system in the poem leads to a concentration on the private sphere.



From here, Rome might begin again to slowly rebuild the bonds of solidarity torn apart by civil war on the basis of utility, as Cato does with Hortensius.

Unfortunately, the damage has gone too far. Cato is too isolated for this retreat and retrenchment to work. As he himself says, the state is already crumbling (*patriaeque ruentis*, 9.385), and the scene of his shipwreck on the shoals of the Syrtes is emblematic of this failure. When Cato is sailing to northern Africa to shift the war there after Pompey's death, half his fleet founders on the treacherous shoals. Lucan then offers an ethnographic description of the tribe of the Nasamonians, who inhabit the African shores. They make their living by plundering shipwrecks, and in this way have "commerce" with the world:

[Nasamon] quem mundi barbara damnis  
Syrtes alit. nam litoreis populator harenis  
imminet et nulla portus tangente carina  
nouit opes: sic cum toto commercia mundo  
naufragiis Nasamones habent.  
—(9.440–44)

[The Nasamonian is] fed by the savage Syrtes  
on the losses of the world. For on the sea-shore's sands the plunderer  
lies in wait and, though no vessel touches his harbor, with wealth  
he is familiar: in this way the Nasamonians trade  
with the entire world, in shipwrecks.

By setting this description of the Nasamones between the shipwreck of Cato's forces and the beginning of his African expedition, Lucan describes the ruin of Cato's commerce. The goods that Cato's ships carried will be plundered by the Nasamonians for their corrupt trade,<sup>133</sup> just as Cato's notion of the proper use of goods will be lost when he dies. Like this economic model and the lost ships themselves, Cato will never find his way back to Italy and his household. In the general shipwreck of Rome that Caesar catalyzes (*naufragium*, 1.503), Cato will not be a *felix naufragus* like Caesar. Nor does the image of shipwreck spell immediate doom for him as it does for Pompey, for although some of Cato's forces perish, he himself comes away unscathed. But distant from his home and city, util-

133. Wick 2004 ad 9.443 writes that the *TLL* classifies this use of *commercium* under the broader sense of *aditus*, *conversatio*, and *consuetudo*, but that it really should be under the stricter sense, the category of a commercial transaction (*strictiore sensu fere i. q. mercatus, actio commercandi*).

ity becomes otiose and merges into Cato's Stoic expression of *uirtus* as he leads his troops through the perils of the African desert. With Cato's death beyond the bounds of the extant poem, the ideal of what is *utilis*, that last virtuous category of exchange, will be extinguished, leaving at last no civilizing interaction, only the pillaging *commercium* of the Nasamonians.





PART III

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Conspicuous Consumption:  
Statius's *Thebaid*





## CHAPTER FIVE

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### Exchange Eclipsed

**S**tatus devotes the second half of his *Thebaid* to a description of the war for Thebes and its aftermath. In the course of the war, six of the seven chieftains who lead the Argive assault fall in battle. Hippomedon, a leader distinguished by his great size and power, engages in a colossal struggle with the river god Ismenos until, exhausted, he is killed by a shower of Theban spears and arrows.<sup>1</sup> The Theban Hypseus at last dares to take the sword and helmet of Hippomedon, but he is quickly killed by Capaneus, an ally of Hippomedon who defends his body. After this success, Capaneus addresses both the dead Hypseus and Hippomedon:

cui super assistens, "non infitiamur honorem  
mortis" ait. "refer huc oculos, ego uulneris auctor;  
laetus abi multumque aliis iactantior umbris!"  
tunc ensem galeamque rapit clipeumque reuellit  
ipsius; exanimumque tenens super Hippomedonta,  
"accipe" ait "simul hostiles, dux magne, tuasque  
exuuias, ueniet cineri decus et suus ordo  
manibus; interea iustos dum reddimus ignes,  
hoc ultor Capaneus operit tua membra sepulcro."  
—(9.557–65)

Standing over him, Capaneus speaks: "I deny you not the glory of your death. Cast your eyes this way: *I* gave the wound. Go happy, and make more boast by far than other shades." Then he seizes sword and helmet and tears away the warrior's own shield and holding them over lifeless

1. 9.492–539.

Hippomedon, "Great leader," he says, "receive your enemy's spoils and your own together. Honor will come to your ashes and proper process to your shade. Meantime, until we render you your due of flames, with this sepulcher Capaneus your avenger overlays your limbs."<sup>2</sup>

Anyone fresh from reading the Homeric epics would recognize familiar features in this passage, notably Hippomedon's fight against Ismenos, which parallels that of Achilles against Scamander.<sup>3</sup> This is in keeping with Statius's overall return to Homeric precedent in his choice and treatment of epic subject. After Vergil and Lucan had moved closer to the Roman present, Statius chose to write of a Theban conflict prior to the Trojan War, a conflict occasioned by the return of the exile Polynices to reclaim the throne from his brother Eteocles. One scholar has aptly called the *Thebaid* "post-Homeric" rather than "post-Vergilian" because Statius employs a range of Homeric conventions and type-scenes to tell his mythic tale.<sup>4</sup>

Statius also returns to the ethical situation of the *Iliad* by providing a broad ensemble cast lacking normative central characters such as Aeneas or Lucan's Cato. Within his more open field, Statius allows for the status competition that Vergil and Lucan exclude when they elevate and isolate their protagonists. Homeric *timē* reemerges as Roman *gloria* produced through the defeat of enemies and acquisition of spoils. In the example above, Hypseus strips the arms from Hippomedon but retains them only briefly before Capaneus kills him. Capaneus then restores the arms to the dead Hippomedon and offers the spoils of Hypseus as an additional honor. Unlike in analogous scenes the *Aeneid*, these characters are not punished for excessive cupidity.<sup>5</sup> Hypseus is killed only because he dared to take arms from a far superior hero and suffered retaliation. But although the

2. All citations from the *Thebaid* are from the Shackleton Bailey 2003 Loeb edition (Shackleton Bailey 2003a and 2003b), as are the translations, which are at times adapted.

3. *Il.* 21.232–360. Dewar 1991 ad 9.446–539 calls this scene "surely one of the finest adaptations of Homer in the whole of Latin epic."

4. Henderson 1998, 215, writes of the "miles of post-Homeric machinery: Olympian inserts, twin catalogues and teichoscopy, necromancy and underworld scenography, funeral games and *arestēiai*, prayer-sequences and prophecy, tragical included narrative and aetiological hymn, developed formal similes, battle-*Sturm und Drang*, mountain vastnesses tipping out torrential volumes of surging verse by the dozen, the whole works." For further discussion of these conventions, see Vessey 1973, 196–229. For an overview of Statius's relationship to Homer, Vergil, and Lucan, see Delarue 2000, 41–116.

5. Earlier in the poem, the Theban elder Phorbas speaks to Antigone of the undying *honores* that the defending Theban forces will have (7.288). Such untroubled *gloria* is distinguished from that which goes too far, such as the *gloria praeceps* that later seems to lead Capaneus to assault the gods (10.834).

heroic economy seems unproblematic in the *Thebaid*, it also remains decidedly anemic.<sup>6</sup> This is one of relatively few examples of virtuous *gloria*. Despite imitating other Homeric type scenes, Statius omits anything as dramatic as the exchange of arms between Glaucus and Diomedes (*Il.* 6.232–36) or between Hector and Ajax (*Il.* 7.303–5), and few characters give guest gifts or recall those others have given.<sup>7</sup>

Statius's treatment of *gloria* is representative of his use of the inherited economic systems of epic. Lucan subverts and parodies the socioeconomic vision of the *Aeneid* but ultimately shares many of Vergil's assumptions and concerns. Statius has neither Vergil's firsthand experience of the Republic nor Lucan's passionate, if conflicted, commitment to its ideals. He does not make the republican interest in reciprocity and commodity exchange an organizing principle of the *Thebaid*. Instead, Statius enlists reciprocal and commodity terms to express the socioeconomic problem at the heart of his epic: wasteful consumption.

In this chapter, I begin by explaining the novel socioeconomic perspective of the *Thebaid* in relation to Statius's life circumstances. I then illustrate how destructive consumption becomes the central economic theme of the *Thebaid*, driving the conduct of both mortals and divinities. I conclude by arguing that Statius creates innovative conceptions of the Roman virtues *pietas* and *clementia* in response to the appetitive excesses he envisions. These inquiries will reveal consumption as the key dynamic in the poem's socioeconomic order and will set the stage for the interpretation of the epic's major characters in the following chapter.

## Statius's Life and Imperial Economic Values

### Gloria

The vestigial system of *gloria* in the *Thebaid* corresponds to the atrophied forms of martial status competition in Statius's Rome. *Gloria* was essentially "a zero-sum type of honor that involved the diminution of a rival."<sup>8</sup> Though it was a driving aspiration of republican elites, *gloria* became less

6. "L'absence de goût pour la gloire est une inquiétante anomalie, souvent liée à la soif du pouvoir" (Ripoll 1998, 235). Ripoll takes the *gloria* of Theseus as representative of true heroism, a position I disagree with. See my discussion of Theseus below.

7. Capaneus's gift of arms to the dead Hippomedon is among a small number of exceptions. Polynices gives a gift of arms (*munere*, 10.256) to Thiodamas, but he is only acknowledging Thiodamas's assumption of duties as seer after the death of Amphiaras.

8. Habinek 2000, 266.



relevant under the Principate. Once the *princeps* had appropriated all military honors,<sup>9</sup> *gloria* could be attained only through socially destructive competition within Rome itself.<sup>10</sup> Statius would have seen the resulting strife firsthand during the civil war of 68–69 that ended with the victory of Vespasian.<sup>11</sup> Despite Lucan's demonstration of the hollowness of glory in civil war,<sup>12</sup> Statius could have introduced pursuit of *gloria* as the cause of the internecine conflict between Eteocles and Polynices, but he chose not to. The relative insignificance of *gloria* in the epic reflects its loss of vitality in imperial society.<sup>13</sup>

### *Reciprocity and Gift Exchange*

As in Lucan's *Civil War*, the *pietas* and *fides* necessary for reciprocal exchange are lacking in the *Thebaid*.<sup>14</sup> Statius tells us from the outset of the poem that the only *pietas* between the warring brothers Eteocles and Polynices is a dedication to fighting over the throne (1.142).<sup>15</sup> In Book 2 of *Aeneid*, Vergil had notably singled out the death of Rhopeus, the "most just" of the Trojans, as a particular loss.<sup>16</sup> Statius presents a clear parallel to this scene in Book 2 of the *Thebaid*, where he laments Tydeus's killing of Periphas, but this unfortunate figure excelled in *pietas* rather than justice (*nil indole clarius illa/nec pietate fuit*, 2.631–32). Yet it is perhaps no small comment on the state of *pietas* in the poem that the pious Periphas took part in the treacherous mission to ambush Tydeus, who himself returns exhausted from singlehandedly defeating a small army to declare that "*pietas* is dead" (*nusquam pietas*, 3.350). Other instances of *pietas* and the reciprocal practices it should inspire are pushed to the margins of

9. In addition to the *princeps*, the term *gloria* was applied to other military victors (Habinek 2000, 270), but within a limited scope. Tacitus (*Agr.* 41) states that Agricola's *gloria* endangered him because it threatened Domitian (Habinek 2000, 274).

10. Habinek 2000, 267.

11. On other possible influences of the disturbances of 68–69 on Statius's poetics, see McNelis 2007, 5.

12. Ripoll 1998, 213.

13. Ripoll 1998, 195, suggests that Vergil may have limited the role of *gloria* in the *Aeneid* in response to the destruction that the seeking of individual *gloria* had caused during the civil war he witnessed.

14. Ganiban 2007 demonstrates the weakness of *pietas* throughout the *Thebaid*, giving references to further discussion at p. 18 n. 90.

15. Their mother, Jocasta, later declares that *pietas* itself recoils at their war (*horrescit pietas*, 7.506) and refers to herself with a transferred epithet as the "impious mother of war" (*impia belli/mater*, 7.483–84).

16. *cadit et Rhopeus, iustissimus unus/qui fuit in Teucris et seruantissimus aequi*, *Aen.* 2.426–27.

the poem to indicate by contrast its absence from the heart of the narrative.<sup>17</sup> Pietas appears as a divinity in two major scenes toward the close of the poem. The Theban prince Menoeceus attempts to sacrifice himself on behalf of his city (10.780), and Pietas, along with Virtus, catches him as he falls. Pietas also makes an abortive attempt to stop the duel between Eteocles and Polynices (11.457–96). As an allegory, then, Pietas is conceptually separated from the souls of mortals and ultimately effects nothing.<sup>18</sup>

Gifts, too, largely fail to achieve their purpose of creating solidarity. Mortals do not succeed in winning the gods over with gifts but only provoke further violence. The Argive women offer Juno a robe (*dono*, 10.56); she in turn contrives for the Thebans to sleep outside their city walls and leave themselves exposed to a night raid.<sup>19</sup> Some gifts appear as such only in an ironic sense,<sup>20</sup> and in situations where, according to epic precedent, we might expect gifts to be exchanged, we pointedly find none. Thus, in place of the sort of introductory gift exchanges Aeneas carries out with Dido or Latinus, we find only the encounter of Tydeus and Eteocles (2.375–481), who trade threats rather than gifts.

The feeble reciprocity of the *Thebaid* might seem to follow logically from Statius's choice of topic: a poem of war between brothers necessarily entails a serious violation of *pietas*, from which the general breakdown of reciprocity ripples outward. Yet Vergil, Statius's most important model in many other respects,<sup>21</sup> had at least provided an example of the exaltation of reciprocity amid (figuratively) civil conflict. In the *Thebaid*, by con-

17. Tiresias entices Laius with "gifts" (*muneribus*, 4.625) to prophesy the events of the coming war. This gesture of gifts to the dead parallels that of Capaneus, as well as the nugatory gifts (*dona*, 9.658) Apollo offers to Amphiaraus after his death, namely his own sadness and the silence of his oracle. We hear of the "pious" (*pious*, 6.6) Hercules as a former "guest" (*hospitis*, 4.162), just as Aurora served as "host" (*hospes*, 6.278) to Io after she was driven east. Even Tantalus is described as *pious* when he was a guest of Jupiter, before his crimes (6.282). In the *teichoscopia* scene, Phorbas points out to Antigone the warrior Iphitus, whose father, Naubolus, was the "host" (*hospes*, 7.356) of "gentle Laius" (*mitissime Lai*, 7.355). He proceeds to briefly describe the scene of Laius's death and wishes he had died along with him. The contrast between gentle Laius, who had guest-friends, and the criminal Oedipus, who killed his own father, is clear.

18. I discuss the allegory of Pietas further below.

19. Thiodamas too offers gifts (*dona*, 10.344) to Apollo in return for success on this raid.

20. For example, the bitter question of the mother of the hero Ismenos about whether his death was the great "gift" (9.376) of his divine ancestors. Another such instance is the offer of the Theban Amphion to "grant" the captured Dymas his life and the burial of his king, Parthenopaeus, "as a gift" (*donatus*, 10.434) if he betrays the Argive forces. Dymas indicates that this would be a bribe rather than a gift by telling Amphion that he will not "buy" (*emimus*, 10.438) his life at such a cost. See further on this scene in chapter 6.

21. The topic of Ganiban 2007.

trast, the one figure who seems to champion traditional reciprocal norms, Adrastus,<sup>22</sup> sees his values entirely eclipsed early in the poem.

Statius's personal experience offers some insight into this choice. The vibrancy of a gift economy and reciprocal values more broadly depends upon their potential for achieving social solidarity on small and grand scales. The less a poet participates in such a system himself, the less likely he is to bring it to life in his composition. Vergil knew and understood the sort of imperfect but real reciprocity that Cicero describes as helping, but ultimately failing, to bind together Roman society. Statius, however, lived in quite different political and personal circumstances. In the *Siluae*, he presents Domitian as the ordering principle of the universe and claims that he could not repay his generosity.<sup>23</sup> The near monopoly on public benefactions exercised by the *princeps* created social cohesion not through voluntary generosity among equals,<sup>24</sup> but rather through a form of patronage that made all members of Roman society clients of one.<sup>25</sup> In the earlier years of the Principate, Seneca presented beneficence as a socially binding force.<sup>26</sup> But his concrete examples focus on fostering supportive friendships, while his Stoic tenets support the idea of bonds among all of humanity. Missing is a robust sense of reciprocity creating group solidarity, because the political domination of the Principate made effective group cohesion among senators and *equites* impractical and even dangerous.

Because Statius remained implicated in networks of giving and receiving, which included Domitian's patronage as well as the many ties to powerful individuals attested in the *Siluae*,<sup>27</sup> he understands traditional

22. Discussed further in chapter 6.

23. On Domitian as a benign universal ruler in the *Siluae*, see Rosati 2006, 48–51. Statius praises a statue of Domitian as a gift of the Roman people to the *princeps*, one clearly out-matched by the power and grandeur of the ruler it represents (*Silu.* 1.1). Statius asks, at the beginning of his poem of thankfulness to Domitian for a dinner invitation, how he can possibly “repay his debt of gratitude” (*quas soluere grates sufficiam?*, *Silu.* 4.2.7–8).

24. Griffin 2003a, 106. Cf. Nauta 2002, 327–35.

25. Habinek 2000, 278, writes of the power exercised through the munificence of the *princeps*. Bowditch 2001, 38 (citing Gordon 1990, 192–94), writes that “the gifts, or *munera*, of public euergetism were a significant strategy by which both Augustus and the aristocratic elite cast an “ideological veil” over their material base of power and thus successfully perpetuated it.” Domitian had a tendency to exercise naked power: in a recent and judicious survey of the evidence, Griffin 2000a has shown that, contrary to the views of some scholars, Domitian was in fact tyrannical and that even his justified reforms were carried out brutally (pp. 60–65, 80). The ideological veil of public benefactions would correspondingly have become quite thin under his rule.

26. Griffin 2003a, 92–93.

27. On Statius's position as a recipient of poetic patronage more generally, see Nauta 2002,

reciprocity. Thus he chides his friend Grypus for sending a book in return for the gift of a book—*est sane iocus iste, quod libellum/misisti mihi, Grype, pro libello*—and suggests Grypus is like a merchant who weighs out same for same on a scale: *sed certa uelut aequus in statera, nil mutas sed idem mihi rependis* (*Silu.* 4.9.1–2, 46–47). Underneath the jest lies the principle that this relationship and others require the maintenance of reciprocal generosity, which mercantile behavior undermines.<sup>28</sup> Yet Statius struggled for the social status required to fully participate in such networks. Juvenal represents Statius as poor and suggests he lives as a pimp to his poetic wares. This is certainly an exaggeration, but Statius was indeed the first Latin poet to admit that he wrote for money.<sup>29</sup> In sum, although Statius lived in a society where political group solidarity through reciprocity was substantially diminished, he nevertheless would have understood, but been only partly invested in, the principle of personal reciprocity for assistance. Statius looked back on his epic predecessors Homer and Vergil, who brought to life societies with a high degree of aristocratic solidarity, but he did not live these values. His personal situation thus gives some grounds for the weakness of traditional *pietas* in the *Thebaid*.<sup>30</sup>

### Mercantile Exchange

Despite his own trade in poetry, Statius follows Vergil and Lucan in representing commodity behavior as mercantile and detrimental, most explicitly with two related figures: Eriphyle, the wife of Amphiaraus, and

193–248. Dominik 1994, 143, notes that “the emperor provided him with a water supply on his Alban estate (*Silu.* 3.1.61–64), ensured his victory in the Alban festival (3.5.28–31; 4.2.63–67), and invited him to an imperial banquet at the palace (4.2.5–10, cf. 4 *praef.* 6f.)” On the villa, see Fantham 1996, 177, with further references.

28. Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 1.13, who writes that “as in other matters, so in the attendance of literary readings: gratitude vanishes if we call upon it” (*nam ut in ceteris rebus ita in audiendi officio perit gratia si reposcatur*).

29. *Sat.* 7.87: *esurit intactam Paridi nisi uendit Agauen*, “he will starve unless he can sell his virgin [play] Agave to Paris.” Gold 2003, 602, notices the suggestion of pimping and discusses Statius as the first poet to write of selling his poetry. On the insecurity of Statius’s social status, see Nauta 2002, 202–3.

30. Indeed, Pollmann 2001 argues for “anti-*pietas*” as the poem’s central theme. Ripoll 1998, 295, who sees Theseus as the exemplar of the good king in the *Thebaid*, acknowledges that even he is not called *pious*. Ganiban 2007, 31–33, observes that, whereas Vergil’s Juno calls for the breaking of social bonds at the beginning of the second half of the *Aeneid* (*dissice compositam pacem*, 7.339), Statius’s Oedipus begins the *Thebaid* with a similar prayer (*consortia . . . dissiliant*, *Theb.* 1.84–85), and that this prayer is programmatic for the lack of any strong social bonds in the poem.

Tisiphone, the Fury whose name means “repayment for killing.” Eriphyle receives Harmonia’s necklace from Argia, the wife of Polynices, in exchange for persuading her reluctant husband to join the war on the Argive side, thereby ensuring the death he foresaw.<sup>31</sup> Statius stresses the perversion of values involved in Eriphyle’s conversion of a gift exchange into a fateful payment, saying that although the story is well-known, he will nevertheless relate the savage power of the gift (*donis*, 2.268) given at this time to Argia by Polynices (*donante marito*, 2.265). The gift first expresses its own strange sort of *fides*, that is, loyalty to its destructive purpose (*fides operi*, 2.289), when Harmonia is turned into a serpent along with Cadmus. Semele puts on the “baneful gift” (*dona nocentia*, 2.292) just before Juno arrives in disguise to persuade her to make the fatal request of Jupiter that he show himself to her in his true form. Argia is resplendent in the “gift” of the necklace (*donis Argia nitet*, 2.297), which strikes envy in the heart of Eriphyle, who for the sake of the necklace foully (*impia*, 2.303) wishes destruction upon her husband, whom she then cozens into going to war (*decepta . . . / arma*, 2.304–5). When Eriphyle finally gets hold of the ornament, the narrator tells us that “the faithless wife was willing to barter her husband for a gift” (*perfida coniunx/dona uiro mutare uelit*, 4.193–94). The dead Amphiarus later draws the same conclusion in his complaint to Pluto, asking that the lord of the underworld punish his wife, Eriphyle, by whom he was “sold out for unjust gold” (*iniquo uenditus auro*, 8.104). Statius’s emphasis on the necklace as a gift, together with the plain commodity language of selling, make the story a potent short fable on the dangers of a mercantile view of the world in which everything is tradable and the desire for gold all-consuming.

When Eriphyle finally takes the necklace into her home, the narrator remarks that the Fury Tisiphone, one of the driving forces of the war, rejoices at what was to come (*graue Tisiphone risit gauisa futuris*, 4.213). Tisiphone delights in Eriphyle’s behavior not only because it helps bring about the war she desires, but also because it resembles her own. She, like Eriphyle, is described as “impious” (*impia*, 9.171) and speaks in commodity terms of her own personal gain. Just before driving Eteocles and Polynices to their fatal duel, Tisiphone tells her sister Fury Megaera that she has already received a “reward” for her time in the upper world that is not unfitting (*nec pretium deforme morae*, 11.80), namely the slaughter she has managed to inflict so far (*quodcumque madet campi, quod san-*

31. The tale goes back to *Od.* 11.326–27. For a discussion of the intertextual connections that figure Argia’s necklace as a cause of strife at Thebes, see McNelis 2007, 50–75.

*guine fumant/stagna*, 11.81–82).<sup>32</sup> Like Eriphyle, Tisiphone is willing to exchange the lives and blood of others for her own satisfaction.

The implicit condemnation of mercantile figures such as Eriphyle and Tisiphone is consistent with Vergil's representation of Juno or Lucan's of Caesar. Unlike these epic predecessors, however, Statius also uses commodity language in ways that do not assert traditional aristocratic economic ideology. In some cases, he simply uses such diction in the sort of bold figures characteristic of his style.<sup>33</sup> For example, Statius writes that the dying warrior Hebrus "gained from the pains of cruel death" (*mortisque ferae lucrata dolores*, 10.317) by being killed quickly and unawares.<sup>34</sup> Often he uses commodity language as just another color in his palette. After the funeral games of Archemorus, the Argive host "buys back" or "makes up for" its delays (*redimuntque moras*, 7.139); delay of war seems like a "gain" (*lucra*, 7.464) to the Thebans; the doomed Atys does not want to wear garb to war "cheaper" (*uilior*, 8.567) than that of his betrothed Ismene; and the Thebans experience an equal "loss and gain" (*iactura lucro*, 10.513) when they shut friend and foe alike outside their gates.<sup>35</sup> In these instances, Statius uses commodity language for its vividness, but without any strong sense of opprobrium for mercantile behavior or praise for frugality.

We might take the bias Statius does show against mercantile behavior in certain cases as simply a vestigial gesture imitating his epic predecessors and read his more neutral use of commodity language as evidence of vivid expressions becoming dead metaphor. Yet Statius's mixed treatment of commodity language seems to arise rather from the changing economic mores of his day. The establishment of the Principate loosened the grip on power of the traditional aristocracy and so created a more fluid social system where the wealthy could rise to the top. Correspondingly, earned wealth became more respectable.<sup>36</sup> Martial at times lauds traditional frugality,<sup>37</sup> but he and Statius both often implicitly praise luxury. This attitude signals not only the acceptance of the earned wealth of these new elites, and so a deemphasis on concerns for the mercantile, but also becomes an ideology that finds solidarity in shared pleasure rather than in

32. Tisiphone also deceives Hippomedon into abandoning the corpse of Tydeus by asserting falsely that Adrastus desperately needs his help, asking Hippomedon whether he thought Adrastus's life was "cheaper" than Tydeus's corpse (*uilior ille/qui superest*?, 9.167–68).

33. On Statius's epic style, see Vessey 1986.

34. Cf. 4.532.

35. Cf. 6.440, 10.463, 10.890.

36. As discussed in the introduction; also see Newlands 2002, 6.

37. Rosati 2006, 52, citing Martial 11.11 and 12.50, along with the discussion of Myers 2000, 112.

bonds of obligation.<sup>38</sup> But if Statius establishes this positive ideal of shared consumption in the *Silvae*, he will show its inverse in the *Thebaid*. Newlands has observed that the *Silvae* are poems of leisure, while in the *Thebaid* Statius “immerses the poet and his audience in the pain and trouble of public life.”<sup>39</sup> Statius could not have been unaware of the costs of pleasurable consumption on a grand scale, not when Nero and Domitian both supplied stunning examples of extravagant imperial lifestyles fed by brutal rapacity.

In place of the traditional socioeconomic concerns of Roman epic, therefore, two new themes arising from Statius’s particular social circumstances dominate the economic landscape of the *Thebaid*. The first is wasteful consumption. To different degrees, various characters generate tremendous waste in the calculated pursuit of their own satisfaction. They share traits with the mercantile figures of earlier epic, but Statius lays much greater emphasis on the flow of resources into these figures and their dissipation, often with images of bodily consumption. The second theme is a valorization of reciprocal *pietas*, albeit in a different form from traditional epic gift exchange. Many scholars have taken *pietas* to be the central theme of the *Thebaid*.<sup>40</sup> When we approach Statius’s articulation of *pietas* from the perspective of its fundamental socioeconomic component, we find confirmation of the view that *pietas* is under assault in the poem. Yet we also see that *pietas* assumes a new form that does not involve exchange but fills the void left by the absence of true reciprocal ties and serves as a limited response to the incursions of all-consuming desires.

### Mortals and Destructive Consumption

In two sets of scenes, Statius illustrates how bodily desires culminate in violent aggression. The first set connects Tydeus and the Sphinx as figures who literally thirst for human blood. In the second, banquets erupt into fighting when indulgence in food and drink spills over into aggression. These scenes illustrate a raw and primal drive for the consumption of

38. This was an “ideology [according to which] luxury not only finds full cultural legitimization, but also reveals its precious functionality as a political instrument: it proves to be an instrument, not of disintegration (which was the traditional accusation of the moralists) but rather of social cohesion”; Rosati 2006, 57.

39. Newlands 2002, 201.

40. Ripoll 1998, 287; Kytzler 2000; Pollmann 2001; and Ganiban 2007, 78. For an overview of other proposed central themes, see Pollmann 2004, 26.

food, blood, and life, for which we find close analogues among the poem's major divinities. In the remainder of this chapter I treat each of these topics in order before examining the effects of the widespread desire for consumption on *pietas*.

*Tydeus and the Sphinx*

At the end of Book 2 of the *Thebaid*, as Tydeus makes his way back from his failed embassy to Thebes, Eteocles sends fifty men to ambush and kill him. The Theban party positions itself beside a narrow ravine across from the cliff where the Sphinx once perched so that Tydeus can be easily surrounded. Statius describes the Sphinx and her lair:

contra importuna crepido,  
 Oedipodioniae domus alitis; hic fera quondam  
 pallentes erecta genas suffusaque tabo  
 lumina, concretis infando sanguine plumis  
 reliquias amplexa uirum semesaque nudis  
 pectoribus stetit ossa premens uisuque trementi  
 conlustrat campos, si quis concurrere dictis  
 hospes inexplicitis aut comminus ire uiator  
 audeat et dirae commercia iungere linguae;  
 nec mora, quin acuens exertos protinus ungues  
 liuentesque manus strictosque in uulnere dentes  
 terribili applausu circum hospita surgeret ora;  
 et latuere doli, donec de rupe cruenta  
 (heu simili deprensa uiro!) cessantibus alis  
 tristis inexpletam scopulis adfligeret aluum.  
 —(2.504–18)

Opposite is a grim ledge, the home of Oedipus's fowl. Here once the savage creature stood, lifting up her pallid cheeks and eyes suffused with putrefaction, her feathers clotted with hideous gore, covering human remains, pressing half-eaten bones with her naked breast, and with wavering stare surveyed the plain, watching for a stranger who might dare to meet her in riddling words, a traveler to approach and have commerce with her evil tongue. And speedily sharpening her pretended nails, with livid hands and teeth bared to wound, with frightful flapping she would rise around the stranger's face. Her wiles stayed hid-



den until a man like (alas!) to herself caught her; and from her bloody cliff, cowed with flagging wings, she dashed her insatiate belly upon the rocks.

The Sphinx kills herself at the end of this passage and is long gone by the time Tydeus encounters the Theban force. This description sets the scene for the ambush, provides some gory images, and recalls the days before Oedipus himself became a monster.<sup>41</sup> Yet it also initiates a series of parallels between Tydeus and the Sphinx that explore how the urge to consume can drive mortals to bestial ferocity.

The Sphinx herself has an insatiable desire for human flesh. Gore (*tabo, sanguine*) stains her face and wings, she holds half-eaten human limbs (*uirum semesa ossa*) to her maiden's breast, and she readies her teeth for striking (*strictos in uulnere dentes*). Bested by Oedipus, the Sphinx dies by casting her "insatiable belly" (*inexpletam aluum*) upon the base of the cliff that was her home. Statius reserves just two lines at the end of this description (516–17) for Oedipus's famous solution of the Sphinx's riddle, devoting most of it to expressions of killing and hunger. The Sphinx's drive to consume human beings leads to an inversion of reciprocal conventions: rather than receive any traveler (*uiator*) properly as a guest (*hospes*), she instead demands a trade in deadly words (*dirae commercia . . . linguae*) in order to trap, kill, and eat her victims.

Tydeus has an intimate connection with the Sphinx, not least because, to defend himself from ambush, he literally takes the place the Sphinx left vacant when she was killed by Oedipus (*petit ardua dirae/Sphingos*, 2.555–56). In this scene, he too seems to thirst for blood: after Tydeus slays his Theban attackers, Statius compares him to a lion that has gorged on the blood of sheep (*sanguine multo/luxuriata fames*, 2.676–77). The word *inexpletus*, used first to describe the Sphinx's drive for consumption, reverberates through the poem, in every instance associated with violence and death.<sup>42</sup> The last two occurrences appear in the final *aristeia* of Tydeus and convey a similarly insatiable desire for violence. Tydeus encounters the Theban Haemon killing countless enemies with an "insatiable sword" (*inexpleto rapitur per milia ferro*, 8.481) but bests him. At the height of his

41. Smolenaars 2004 investigates numerous intertextual parallels for the description of the Sphinx's lair.

42. When Tiresias begins his necromancy to divine the Thebans' future, he addresses the underworld as "the domain of insatiable death" (*regnum/Mortis inexpletæ*, 4.473–74). Just before his death, Amphiarus is transformed from gentle seer to savage killer by an insatiable desire for slaughter (*inexpleto saeui Mauortis amore*, 7.703).

fury, Tydeus rebukes the Thebans for their cowardice and challenges them all with the following boast:

ille ego inexpletis solus qui caedibus hausi  
 quinquaginta animas: totidem, totidem heia gregatim  
 ferte manus!  
 —(8.666–68)

I am he that single-handed swallowed up fifty lives, insatiate in slaughter. Bring as many on and on all at once!

In this later fight, Tydeus recalls his victory over the Theban ambush party, where he had taken up the Sphinx's position. He matches his lustful consumption of human life during that previous encounter (*inexpletis . . . caedibus*) with the Sphinx's unquenchable desire for human flesh (*inexpletam . . . aluum*) described earlier. Accordingly, Tydeus continues his *aristeia* by taking a prodigious number of lives:

et iam corporibus sese spoliisque cadentum  
 clauserat; unum acies circum consumitur, unum  
 omnia tela uouent.  
 —(8.700–702)

And now he had blocked himself with corpses and the spoils of the falling. Around him alone the army expends itself, for him alone all missiles long.

A circle of warriors surrounds Tydeus in a concerted attempt to kill him, but they themselves are “used up” (*consumitur*), forming a wall of corpses and weapons.

Tydeus ultimately makes his metaphorical drive to consume the life and blood of others real in a final scene where he fully appropriates the behavior of the Sphinx. In his dying moments, Tydeus gnaws at the head of his enemy Melanippus, covering his jaws with human blood (*uiuo scelerantem sanguine fauces*, 8.761) much as the Sphinx had covered her face with human gore (*suffusaque tabo/lumina*, 2.505–7). As a consequence, Pallas deprives him of the immortality she was poised to grant (8.758–66). Tydeus's desire for slaughter, which he has barely constrained and directed toward honorable military ends, now exceeds its bounds and costs him the incommensurable boon of eternal life.

Surprisingly, despite Tydeus's fundamental resemblance to the Sphinx, he also practices reciprocal values in traditional heroic fashion. Tydeus participates in the economy of gifts: he receives his sword as a gift from his father, Oeneus (*munera magni/Oeneus*, 2.587–88). In his slaughter of the Theban ambush party he leaves one man alive to report the defeat to Eteocles. Both he and the spared soldier declare that his clemency was a "gift" (*munere nostro*, 2.697; *donat*, 3.59; *munera*, 3.66). In the deliberations over how to approach Eteocles, Tydeus appeals to the notion of *fides*, arguing that Polynices should pursue war because it is impossible to rely on the "good faith" of his brother (*fidei*, 7.542; *fidem*, 7.612). And he disparages others by describing their thoughts and actions in commodity terms: he invites the Thebans to attack him and "get repayment" (*rependere*, 8.665) for their comrades slaughtered the previous night.<sup>43</sup>

The incongruous traits in Tydeus's character are representative of the dominance throughout the poem of the concern for excess consumption over traditional aristocratic socioeconomic priorities. If we compare Tydeus to Vergil's Nisus and Euryalus, for example, we see that although, like them, Tydeus is driven to acquire spoils, he does so without evidence of mercantile thinking. Yet he has a raw desire to consume that is absent in the Vergilian heroes. The urge for consumption ruins Tydeus despite his adherence to the traditional norms of reciprocity. We might imagine that, among the class of wealthy men who populate Statius's *Silvae*, there was one reminiscent of Vedius Pollio, who lived in Augustus's day and outraged the *princeps* by feeding his slaves to his pet lampreys for trivial offenses.<sup>44</sup> Such a person might in other respects conform to the norms of aristocratic behavior but share something of the pleasure that Tydeus takes in consuming human flesh.

### *Dining and Fighting*

Just as Vedius Pollio's entertainments ended in a debacle, so too not every grand meal in Statius's Rome promised a pleasant experience.<sup>45</sup> In the *The-*

43. I address other examples of this last point in my discussion of Eteocles in chapter 6.

44. Sen. *De Ira* 3.40.

45. Domitian hosts one banquet in which his guests are treated to a macabre enactment of their own funerals (Dio Cass. 67.9). Although Statius does not recount any event quite so ghoulish, in the *Silvae* he does present the great social distance between himself and his banquet host, Domitian, as a rift between poet and patron (Malamud 2001, 33–36). And the banquets of the *princeps* could produce strife when they fell short of elite expectations for the exchange of hospitality. Goddard 1994 gives examples of the perceived ill effects of such lavish spending on banquets under the Julio-Claudians and Flavians.

*baid*, feasts are often the occasion of conflict: scarcely a cup can be raised without a fight breaking out. Statius had a precedent for this situation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where two feasts turn violent, one between the camps of Perseus and a rival suitor of Andromeda, and another between the Lapiths and Centaurs.<sup>46</sup> In Ovid's singular epic mode, these struggles constitute the major episodes of combat. Statius devotes ample space to conventional epic battle narrative but also shows violence erupting at several feasts. These banquet scenes reflect in small compass the theme of excess consumption leading to violence that dominates the poem's main war narrative.

Participants in a feast ordinarily strengthen social ties by giving generously to one another as hosts, guests, or companions. But diners may instead violate this expression of reciprocity by themselves consuming what should be offered to others.<sup>47</sup> Self-indulgence thus begets ill will and, particularly when aided by wine, can lead to attempts at further self-indulgence through physical and sexual aggression. This escalation occurs in Ovid's battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs when the Centaur Eurytus has too much to drink and conceives a desire for Pirithous's new bride, Hippodame. Eurytus grabs Hippodame *per uim*, and the remaining Centaurs ensure an all-out battle by snatching other Lapith women.<sup>48</sup>

A similar progression is enacted early in the *Thebaid* when Statius compares a Theban Bacchic festival to a Thracian feast:

ipse etiam gaudens nemorosa per auia sanas  
 impulerat matres Baccho meliore Cithaeron:  
 qualia per Rhodopen rabido conuiuia coetu  
 Bistones aut mediae ponunt conuallibus Ossae;  
 illis semianimum pecus excussaeque leonum  
 ore dapes et lacte nouo domuisse cruorem  
 luxus; at Ogygii si quando adflauit Iacchi  
 saeuus odor, tunc saxa manu, tunc pocula pulchrum

46. *Met.* 5.1–235, 12.210–535.

47. Roller 2001, 147–73, demonstrates how Roman banquets were the site of the contestation of power in reciprocal and commodity exchange terms, both in aristocratic circles generally and in particular when dining with the emperor. The violence at the banquets of the *Thebaid* is from one perspective a representation of the natural extension into physical conflict of this struggle over status, augmented by the implicit comparison of the appetite for power with the appetite for food and drink.

48. *Met.* 12.219–225.

spargere et inmerito sociorum sanguine fuso  
 instaurare diem festasque reponere mensas.  
 —(2.79–88)

Cithaeron himself had merrily driven sane mothers through the wooded wilds under a better Bacchus. Such feasts do Bistones in wild assembly lay out on Rhodope or amid Ossa's vales; for them a sheep half living, food shaken from lions' jaws, and blood diluted with new milk is luxury; but if ever the fierce odor of Ogygian Iacchus breathes upon them, then they love to scatter stones and winecups, and after spilling guiltless blood of comrades to begin the day afresh and reset the festal boards.

These Thracians show their native ferocity by eating half-living animals but turn to true savagery against one another only with the addition of Theban wine. This Theban element within the simile reinforces the concept that excess consumption will lead to brutality among the Thebans as well.

In a more extended meditation on the same theme in Book 5, the Argives, on their way to war with Thebes and perishing from thirst, are saved by a chance encounter with Hypsipyle. When they inquire into her history, she recounts at length the Lemnian women's slaughter of their husbands, a tale that presents a woman's perspective on the genesis of violence and articulates a different configuration of consumption. The women of Lemnos react to the social disruption caused by the male desire for violence with an effort at self-determination, but in doing so they generate violence that is still more destructive to their society.

The setting for the conflict is once again a banquet scene, but its origins lie in a failure to properly honor Venus: *nullos Veneri sacrauimus ignis, / nulla deae sedes*, 5.58–59. The utter absence of shrines to Venus is consistent with the absence of proper forms of reciprocity throughout the *Thebaid*. But regard for Venus is the particular concern of the poem's married women, whose social roles depend largely on their relationships, sexual and otherwise, with their husbands. Because they do not fulfill their reciprocal obligations to the goddess, she turns the feast, ordinarily an occasion for generosity, into a massacre. As Bacchus later remarks, Venus punishes the Lemnians with the sort of harshness one would expect from Mars (*unde manus, unde haec Mauortia diuae pectora?*, 5.282–83).<sup>49</sup>

49. Ganiban 2007, 85–86, notes that in her instigation of strife, Statius's Venus resembles Vergil's Juno.

By manipulating aspects of traditional Roman gender roles at the banquet, Statius portrays the Lemnian women as failing to properly manage their consumption and thus shows them undermining their own effort at self-determination. The Lemnian men have a desire for violence so strong that it borders on the erotic: Venus has removed their delight (*gaudia*, 5.72) in sex and replaced it with a sweeter (*dulcius*, 5.78) delight in continuous and apparently gratuitous battle. This desire leads the Lemnian men to conduct long wars away from home against the Thracians. Even when they return home, the men continue to speak with relish of the wars they have left, but their consumption at the celebration banquet leaves them slack and dissipated rather than violent:

iam domibus fusi et nemorum per opaca sacrorum  
 ditibus indulgent epulis uacuantque profundo  
 aurum inmane mero, dum quae per Strymona pugnae,  
 quis Rhodope gelidoue labor sudatus in Haemo  
 enumerare uacat.  
 —(5.186–90)

Now stretched out in their homes and in the shade of the sacred groves they indulge in sumptuous banquets and empty great golden goblets of their depth of wine, as they tell at their leisure of flights along the Strymon, of sweat and toil on Rhodope or icy Haemus.

The men are “poured out” (*fusi*) of their homes even before the feast begins. They then proceed to “indulge in sumptuous feasting” (*ditibus indulgent opulis*) and drink enormous amounts of unmixed wine (*profundo mero*) from huge golden cups (*aurum immane*). Statius reverses the order of events in other troubled banquets by having the Lemnian men fight first, then drink. He calls attention to this contrast with several allusions to the Thracian and Lapith feasts.<sup>50</sup> The Lemnian men channel the powerful desire for violence given them by Venus into external war and so spare their community the fighting typical of those other feasts. Yet they them-

50. The Lemnian men fight against the “savage tribe” of the Thracians (*saeuam . . . gentem*, 5.76), and Thrace is mentioned or alluded to six times before the slaughter: 5.75, 84, 121, 142, 173, 189. Hypsipyle later compares the Lemnian women to Scythian Amazons and to lionesses on the Scythian plain, 5.133–36. These references to Scythia and Thrace recall the Thracian banquet of Book 2, while the mention of Scythian lionesses echoes the description of Eteocles as a tigress, 2.128–33. Hypsipyle also compares the aftermath of the slaughter with the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs among their feasting tables, 5.261–64.

selves are killed at a banquet and their society is destroyed because their preoccupation with war erodes the bonds of marriage.

When Venus punishes the Lemnian women by suppressing the sexual desire and augmenting the war lust of their husbands, the women try to imitate their husbands' dispositions in order to gain control of their situation. One among their number, Polyxo, enjoins them to strengthen their spirits and become like men (*firmate animos et pellite sexum*, 5.105) in order to kill their husbands and live as they please. They begin by suppressing their desires at the feast. They abstain from eating or drinking, only reclining in splendid clothing beside their husbands.<sup>51</sup> While Venus fills the Lemnian men with long-forgotten erotic desire, the women flirt playfully (*ludoque licenti*, 5.195) but only to entrap their husbands.

Soon enough, however, the Lemnian women match their husbands' consumption, as their suppressed erotic desire emerges and takes shape as a lust for violence.<sup>52</sup> Statius compares the desire of the women to kill their husbands to the hunger of Hyrcanean lionesses about to devour cattle in the Scythian fields:

non aliter Scythicos armenta per agros  
Hyrcanae clausere leae, quas exigit ortu  
prima fames, audique implorant ubera nati.  
—(5.203–5)

Not otherwise do Hyrcanean lionesses encircle herds in Scythian fields; early hunger drives them forth at dawn and their greedy cubs implore their udders.

The simile subtly alludes to the violent Thracian banquet of 2.79–88. It is set in Scythia, which Statius conflates with Thrace in the earlier simile.<sup>53</sup> The location of the scene in Scythia thus assimilates the women's desire to the delight in violence taken by the Thracians, and the figure of the lioness makes them resemble Eteocles, who was earlier compared to a hungry tigress (2.128–33). More saliently, two elements within the lioness simile contrast with the actions of the Lemnian women and highlight

51. 5.190–91.

52. A lust they will later regret, 5.326–27.

53. Statius does not seem to distinguish clearly between Thrace and Scythia, for he makes the Thracians of line 2.84 milk drinkers, whereas other ancient sources (Strabo 7.3.7–9; Hdt. 4.64) attribute the practice of drinking milk to the Scythians.

the severity of their intrafamilial violence. When they are compared to Hyrcanean (Thracian) lionesses, the women are likened to their husbands' enemies and thus seem to bring foreign battles into the domestic space. In addition, lionesses will attack on behalf of their offspring, but the Lemnian women kill their sons along with their husbands. By underscoring the family bonds severed by the Lemnian women, Statius emphasizes that their desire for violence exceeds their husbands' desire to eat and drink and even the instinctive urge of a lioness to devour prey.

Venus fashions ironically fitting punishments for both the Lemnian men and women. The Lemnian men have their desire for battle fulfilled with a war that breaks out just when their thoughts had turned back to their wives. The Lemnian women kill their husbands for lack of sexual attention just as their husbands were starting to demonstrate it.<sup>54</sup> Yet the greatest irony is that the Lemnian women imitate the excessive violent consumption of their husbands while attempting to master their circumstances: they lose control while attempting to gain it.<sup>55</sup>

Hypsipyle herself suffers twice over, falling victim both to the Lemnian men's lust for war and to the women's desire for self-determination. As she recounts her story, she represents herself as acting with *pietas* and *fides*.<sup>56</sup> She shows no desire for food, drink, sex, or violence but is nevertheless subject to the consuming excesses of the Lemnian men and women: through their actions, she is ultimately deprived of her community, raped by Jason (5.454–57), and driven into exile. The calamity that

54. Ganiban 2007, 93, also notes that by killing their males, the Lemnian women create what they had sought to avoid in the first place: abandonment by their husbands.

55. The Theban bacchantes of Book 2 respond similarly to their husbands' festal indulgence by raving in the woodlands with Thracian savagery. The Argive women who petition the altar of Clementia in Book 12 likewise let loose another round of fighting at Thebes. I would therefore characterize the participation of women in the violence of the *Thebaid* differently than Keith 2000, 95–100. She argues that Statius reverses gender roles by having women actively pursue war, but she draws no distinction between mortal women and divinities. The Furies and Venus certainly cause devastation, but among mortals only Argia, corrupted by Harmonia's necklace, actually urges war. Otherwise, mortal women bring about violence indirectly while attempting to protect themselves from the destruction unleashed by the predominately masculine drive for consumption.

56. She is a "host" (*hospitis*, 5.35) to the Argives. She explicitly or implicitly condemns the false "faith" (*fides*, 5.155), impiety (*manus impia*, 5.190; *impia scelera*, 5.300–301; *impia plebes*, 5.488), and misplaced *hospitium* (*hospitibus*, 5.449) of her fellow Lemnian women, as well as Jason's violation of *hospitium* (*hospite*, 5.464) and lack of *fides* (5.474), and she appeals to her own good faith (*fidem*, 5.323). She condemns herself for failing to uphold *pietas* and *fides* in looking after Opheltes (*pietas haec magna fidesque!*, 5.627), a judgment with which his mother, Eurydice, agrees when she scorns Hypsipyle's claims to *pietas* (*pietate*, 6.153) and calls her *impia* (6.154).



began with the breakdown of reciprocity between gods and mortals ends with the commodification of the last victim when Hypsipyle is sold into slavery (*famulam*, 5.498). Yet even as a commodity, Hypsipyle cannot escape the harmful effects of the desire for consumption.<sup>57</sup> As she tells her tale, a serpent driven by an all-consuming thirst devours her young charge Opheltes.<sup>58</sup>

### Divine Consumption and Calculation

The serpent responsible for the death of Opheltes is sacred to the god Jupiter (*sanctum* . . . *Tonanti*, 5.511), who nearly kills Capaneus for destroying it.<sup>59</sup> It is just one of the ravenous beasts Jupiter and the Olympians loose upon mortals. These gods, too, take a kind of pleasure in consumption, the same appetitive sort of delight in violence that captivates Tydeus and the Lemnian men.

In recent years, scholars have established that the Olympian gods of the *Thebaid*, and Jupiter above all, are negligent if not outright hostile toward mortals.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, they often differ little from the underworld powers.<sup>61</sup> Yet Statius's use of economic language indicates one subtle but significant

57. Ganiban 2007, 94: "*Pietas* fails Hypsipyle, and her attempts to portray herself as a figure of *pietas* (through her extended narrative) result in still more *nefas*. The Lemnian tale, thus, is ultimately not about the valorizing of *pietas* but about its defeat."

58. 5.538–40. The approaching serpent has "dry venom" (*sicci* . . . *ueneni*, 5.521) and looks for any water that might cling to the grass (*pronus adhaeret humo, si quid uiridantiaudent/gramina*, 5.526–27). Schrader's emendation of *incertusque sui* to *incensusque siti* in 5.524 only makes the serpent's thirst more explicit.

59. 5.583–87.

60. For Williams 1972b, xx, the Olympian gods are "ruthlessly selfish in pursuit of their own ends and their own honour and reckless of human suffering." In his study of Jupiter in the Flavian epics, Schubert 1984, 257–58, concludes that Statius's Jupiter is self-serving and unjust, though no more so than most of the mortals over whom he rules. Ahl 1986, 2845, sees Jupiter as "aligned with the powers of evil." Dominik 1994, 1, develops a categorical indictment, arguing that the "divine powers [of the *Thebaid*] . . . are essentially antagonistic to the human race and are shown propelling man headlong toward destruction." Cf. pp. 63, 68–69, 73–74, and 129. Davis 1994, 481, calls Jupiter "an absolute prince of doubtful justice." See also Criado 2000, 196–204, and Ganiban 2007, 51–52, on Jupiter's malevolence. The analyses of these scholars have made it difficult to agree with the assessment of Jupiter as a "just and impartial deity" who "rules with equity" (Vessey 1973, 91, 82) or a "*volonté bonne*" (D'Espèrey 1983, 102). Dominik 1994, 2 n. 6, documents other similar opinions. Braund 1996 generally agrees with Vessey regarding the gods of the poem.

61. Ahl 1986, 2841, writes that not only is Jupiter "aligned with the powers of evil," but "there is little discernible difference between the forces of Jupiter and the powers of hell," a position further developed on pp. 2842–45 and 2861.

distinction in disposition between the celestial and chthonic gods. Ironically, the underworld god whose name literally means “wealthy” (Pluto < Gk. *ploutos*), and who by tradition carefully counts the souls he receives, never appears in the poem as an avid consumer of lives, nor does he use commodity language to describe his business of death.<sup>62</sup> To be sure, when Pluto interprets Amphiaraus’s sudden descent into the underworld as an attack on his domain, he acts every bit the defensive, wantonly destructive king, commanding Tisiphone to visit widespread destruction upon mortals.<sup>63</sup> But Pluto attributes malicious calculating behavior to Jupiter, complaining that he and Ceres reckon up time against him by demanding the return of Persephone to the light for half the year: *iniustaeque a Ioue leges/protinus, et sectum genetrix mihi computat annum* (8.63–64). Pluto’s judgment is hardly unbiased, but his suggestion is borne out by the behavior of the Olympians themselves. Among the divinities of the *Thebaid*, Statius reserves the language of both consumption and commodity exchange for the Olympians, above all Jupiter, Apollo, and Mars: the traditional roles are reversed, and the Olympians, rather than Pluto, measure out the satisfaction they take in consuming mortal lives.

### *Jupiter’s Desire for Violence*

Scholars have amply documented Jupiter’s preference for violence,<sup>64</sup> but have not accounted for the way in which Statius frames this preference as a consumptive appetite, beginning with his first words in the poem. Having assembled the divine court, Jupiter first decries the constant need to punish the crimes of humanity:

terrarum delicta nec exsaturabile Diris  
ingenium mortale queror. quonam usque nocentum  
exigar in poenas? taedet saeuire corusco  
fulmine.  
—(1.214–17)

62. Unlike the semi-independent Furies who act as his agents. See 9.167–68, 11.80–82, and further below.

63. 8.34–79. Pluto is also no gracious host: he complains of having another “living guest” (*hospite uiuo*, 8.52) when Amphiaraus plunges alive into his underworld kingdom.

64. Dominik 1994, 8–9, with examples at pp. 1–75. Dominik addresses the passage that follows, *Theb.* 1.216–17, on p. 8. Schubert 1984, 133, sees in Jupiter “ein Vergnügen an Schrecklichem.” Cf. Feeney 1991, 371.

Earth's sins and the mind of man that no demons of vengeance can satiate I do protest. How much longer shall I be driven to punish the guilty? Weary am I of raging with flashing bolt.

Jupiter's phrase *nec exsaturabile* suggests that he has more interest in hurling his thunderbolt than he affects.<sup>65</sup> In all of surviving Latin literature, the word *exsaturabile* occurs only here and in a passage of the *Aeneid* where Venus asks for Neptune's aid against Juno, in the same metrical *sedes* and also preceded by a form of *nec*:<sup>66</sup>

Iunonis grauis ira neque exsaturabile pectus  
 cogunt me, Neptune, preces descendere in omnis,  
 quam nec longa dies pietas nec mitigat ulla,  
 nec Iouis imperio fatisque infracta quiescit.  
 non media de gente Phrygum exedissee nefandis  
 urbem odiis satis est nec poenam traxe per omnem  
 reliquias Troiae.  
 —(*Aen.* 5.781–87)

Juno's fell wrath and implacable heart constrain me, O Neptune, to stoop to every prayer. Her no lapse of time, nor any goodness softens, nor does she rest, still unbent by Fate and Jove's command. It is not enough that from the midst of the Phrygian race in her fell hate she has devoured their city and dragged through utmost vengeance the remnants of Troy.

Venus complains that she is compelled by Juno's "inexhaustible" (*neque exsaturabile*) resentment of the Trojans to seek Neptune's assistance. It was not enough for Juno to have "devoured" (*exedissee*) the city of Troy; she continues to persecute the survivors. This mention of devouring in the *Aeneid* is itself an allusion to *Il.* 4.35–36, in which Zeus tells Hera she could only be satisfied by eating Priam, his sons, and all of the Trojans raw. Vergil's allusion indicates that "Venus . . . does not mean *exedo* merely metaphorically. She may be letting hyperbole and emotion run away with

65. Shackleton Bailey prints *exsaturabile*, which is the reading of the Puteaneus manuscript as well as the later codices. Hill chooses the orthographical variant *exaturabile*.

66. This passage from the *Aeneid* is discussed by Lyne 1989, 173–77, and I follow his interpretation here.

her, but she wishes us to think of Juno actually *eating* the Trojan city."<sup>67</sup> The strikingly unusual word *exsaturabilis* at *Aeneid* 781 and the rather literal *exedis* at 785 combine to emphasize the notion of eating that underlies both. This reading provides one explanation for Vergil's earlier play on Juno as daughter of "Saturn" who is not yet "sated" (*Saturnia Iuno . . . necdum antiquum saturata dolorem*, 5.606–8). Venus's image of Juno devouring the Trojans also recalls the fact that her father, Saturn, had himself become a cannibal by eating his children.<sup>68</sup>

In the *Thebaid*, Jupiter's singular recollection of this moment in the *Aeneid* recalls Vergil's representation of Juno as "a cannibalistic self-satisfier."<sup>69</sup> Jupiter refers not to his own mind, however, but to those of mortals, as *nec exsaturabile*. Yet the following sentence suggests that he is projecting his own disposition onto others. Jupiter speaks of his own satiety with inflicting violence, saying has wearied of hurling the thunderbolt (*taedet saeuire corusco/fulmine*, 1.216–17). By speaking of his weariness, Jupiter defines his use of violence against mortals not in terms of the strict execution of justice, but rather in terms of his own personal satisfaction. In this, Jupiter sounds much as Tisiphone will later, when she ashamedly confesses to her sister Megaera that she is temporarily fatigued with mortal slaughter: *longo sudore fatiscunt/corda, soror, tardaeque manus*, 11.92–93. Like Tisiphone, Jupiter can grow wearied of the infliction of violence, but, as we see in subsequent scenes, his underlying desire abides and makes him, more than the mortals he speaks of, *nec exsaturabile*.

As part of this characterization, Statius aligns the behavior of Jupiter and Tisiphone elsewhere. Just after declaring his weariness with punishing mortals, Jupiter overhears Oedipus's prayer to Tisiphone to take vengeance upon his sons. He then amplifies this request, assuming and extending the role of Tisiphone, by promising that the cities of Thebes and Argos will be destroyed.<sup>70</sup> Tisiphone's flights to earth to bring destruction are twice compared to the course of Jupiter's thunderbolt (*igne Iouis . . . citatior*, 1.92; *caelesti . . . ocior igni*, 11.483).<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, when Tisiphone proposes to orchestrate the final duel between Eteocles and Polynices, she calls forth her sister Megaera from the underworld with a rite in which she imitates a characteristic gesture of Jupiter. After digging into the ground

67. Lyne 1989, 175.

68. Hes. *Theog.* 459–60, as Kronos.

69. Lyne 1989, 177.

70. Oedipus: 1.56–87; Jupiter 1.214–47. Ahl 1986, 2838–40.

71. Feeney 1991, 347.

with her sword, Tisiphone speaks a spell into the earth and plucks a hissing snake from her serpentine locks, which she brandishes over her head (*crinalem attollit longo stridore cerasten*, 11.65). Her pose mimics that of Jupiter poised to hurl his cracking thunderbolt, a parallel evident when Jupiter responds to Tisiphone's rite by looking to his own thunderbolts (*pater Aetnaeos iterum respexit ad ignes*, 11.68). In light of Tisiphone's manifest power, Jupiter must reassure himself that he has the force to maintain his cosmic authority, but he also looks to his lightning bolts as the source of the same pleasure Tisiphone derives from summoning destruction with her snake. Here, at the end of the poem, a sated Jupiter quits the field before Tisiphone, but only after causing terrific carnage. Ahl notes that "we might aptly observe of Statius's Jupiter what Seneca observes of Octavian: *ego uero clementiam non uoco lassam crudelitatem* (*De Clementia* 1.11.2),"<sup>72</sup> and these parallels between Jupiter and Tisiphone support his reading.

Jupiter justifies the slaughter visited upon mortals with the argument that the leading houses of Thebes and Argos have a history of offenses against the gods attributable to an inherited disposition: *mens cunctis imposta manet* (1.227). This mentality has led to major Theban crimes: Cadmus's slaughter of the sown men, warring Furies summoned from hell, the boasting of Niobe, and the dismembering of Pentheus (1.227–31). At the end of this speech, Jupiter mentions one Argive deed involving a particularly gruesome act of consumption, the attempt by Tantalus to serve his son as a meal for the gods: *neque enim arcano de pectore fallax/Tantalus et saevae periit iniuria mensae* (1.246–47). Yet Jupiter also reveals that he himself passed this disposition to his Theban and Argive descendants, for just prior to impugning the "fixed mentality" (*mens imposta*) which corrupts these two houses, he emphatically declares that he was their progenitor:

nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor  
 ipse ego, descendo. Perseos alter in Argos  
 scinditur, Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas.  
 mens cunctis imposta manet.  
 —(1.224–27)

Now I descend to punish two houses, which I myself fathered. One stream branches to Persean Argos, the other flows from its fount to Aonian Thebes. The character stamped on all of them abides.

72. Ahl 1986, 2835 n. 36.

The bizarrely violent act of consumption contemplated by Tantalus, as well as the other offenses Jupiter lists, are in part products of a mentality he has transmitted to his Argive and Theban descendants.<sup>73</sup>

Although the crime of the Argive Tantalus attests to the sort of *mens* Jupiter shares with his descendants, it is also an exceptional instance of an Argive transgression. Elsewhere in the poem, Argives typically depart from Jupiter's way of thinking. The hero Coroebus suffers tribulations imposed by the gods but does not commit violent outrages as the Thebans have done.<sup>74</sup> Adrastus, king of the Argives, believes that individuals can escape from the consequences of their ancestors' crimes,<sup>75</sup> although Jupiter plans to destroy Argos and Thebes for just such transgressions. Adrastus halts the quarrel between Polynices and Tydeus on his threshold, goes to war only reluctantly, and flees from the sight of the Theban brothers' duel.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, Jupiter's unlooked-for responsiveness to Oedipus's prayer and his list of Theban crimes are the first indications that his living Theban descendants do indeed share his mentality. This affinity is confirmed by the fact that both Jupiter and Oedipus turn to the underworld at the beginning of the poem when they seek to punish others, an expedient sure to cause widespread destruction.<sup>77</sup>

Jupiter expresses his own *mens* most fully in the beginning of Book 7, when he sends Mercury to spur on Mars. He describes in detail what he expects from the god of war:

at si ipsi rabies ferrique insana uoluptas  
qua tumet, inmeritas cineri dabit impius urbes  
ferrum ignemque ferens, implorantesque Tonantem  
sternet humi populos miserumque exhauriet orbem.  
—(7.22–25)

73. So Davis 1994, 481, who does not, however, note that Thebans as more subject to this disposition than Argives. Bernstein 2003, 360–61, argues that the members of the Theban royal line have inherited only a disposition to be affected by the Furies. But the fact that they share Jupiter's mentality suggests that they have his inherent desire for violence, which the Furies only exacerbate (Hershkowitz 1994 interprets this as inherited madness).

74. 1.557–668. There are some other similarities between this story and the Theban events, however. See Ahl 1986, 2854.

75. As he says to Polynices, 1.680–92.

76. Stopping the quarrel: 1.435–46; reluctance for war: 3.711–21, *uix sponte incedit Adrastus*, 4.40; flight at brothers' duel: 11.439–46.

77. Ahl 1986, 2840. I consider the similarities between Jupiter and the Theban monarchs further in the next chapter.

But if he himself has the frenzy, the mad delight in battle that he is so proud of, he will ruthlessly give guiltless cities to ash with steel and fire and strew peoples on the ground as they implore the Thunderer and exhaust the hapless world.

Jupiter had already contemplated the coming slaughter when he first commanded Mars to return from his far-off battlefields with his dripping sword (*ense madens*, 3.230) and initiate the Theban war. Here he calls on Mars to give full rein to the “mad delight” he takes in violence (*ferrique insana uoluptas*) by destroying cities and lives. The representation of the war god elsewhere in the poem bears out Jupiter’s characterization of him as bloodthirsty. We later visit the palace of Mars, a shrine to the suffering caused by war that Statius sums up as containing “every sort of violence and wound” (*uis omnis et omne/uulnus*, 7.59–60). The demon Tisiphone feels the need to distinguish herself from Mars by dismissing the massive battlefield carnage she wreaks as good enough for him (*Mars habeat*, 11.84) and passing on to greater crimes such as inciting Tydeus to cannibalism.

The vividly bloody scenario Jupiter paints for himself shows that Mars is not alone in finding *uoluptas* in violence. Two factors especially point in this direction. The first is the manner in which Jupiter dwells indulgently on the details of the slaughter Mars will inflict. Rather than speaking briefly about a necessary evil, he creates for himself a vivid vision of the calamity and pores over the sights on offer. Secondly, within this vision Jupiter imagines suffering and dying mortals, who will call upon him (*implorantesque Tonantem*), it is clear, in vain. He anticipates with pleasure his power not only to inflict violence through his agent Mars, but also to deny salvation from it. These attitudes make Jupiter’s position equivalent to that of Mars. When Jupiter declares that if Mars does not start the war quickly he will punish him by making him a god of kindness and peace (*sit mite bonumque/numen*, 7.29–30), his claim that he is not threatening Mars with any “cruel punishment” (*nil equidem crudele minor*, 7.29) only calls attention to the fact that he envisions an unmerited and cruel punishment for mortals. As he continues, Jupiter says that Mars will have to relinquish his office if he disobeys (*reddat equos enseque mihi, nec sanguinis ultra/ius erit*, 7.31–32), and we suspect that, despite his occasional weariness from hurling the thunderbolt, Jupiter would not object too strongly to taking up these duties himself. He had earlier described Mars as “insatiate” and “revelling in the blood of his own Thracians” (*arma tubasque/insatiatus habet caraeque in san-*

*guine gentis/luxuriat*, 7.11–13), but Jupiter too is ultimately *insatiatus nec exsaturabile*.

Jupiter's brother Pluto points out most explicitly the delight that Jupiter takes in violence. In response to what he perceives as an incursion from the upper world, Pluto ordains that Tisiphone arrange for the most horrific acts to occur during the Theban war:

i, Tartareas ulciscere sedes,  
Tisiphone; si quando nouis asperrima monstribus,  
triste, insuetum, ingens, quod nondum uiderit aether,  
ede nefas, quod mirer ego inuideantque Sorores.  
atque adeo fratres (nostrique haec omina sunt  
prima odii), fratres alterna in uulnera laeto  
Marte ruant; sit qui rabidarum more ferarum  
mandat atrox hostile caput, quique igne supremo  
arceat exanimis et manibus aethera nudis  
commaculet: iuuat ista ferum spectare Tonantem.  
—(8.65–74)

Go, Tisiphone, avenge Tartarus's abode. Now if ever be at your worst with newfound monsters, and show us an abomination, grim, unwanted, enormous, something the sky has never seen before, to make me marvel and your sisters envy. Or rather let brothers (and let this be the first omen of our hate), ay brothers, rush to kill one another in joyous strife. Let there be a savage who like a rabid wild beast gnaws his enemy's head and another who bans the lifeless from final fire and pollutes the air with naked dead. Let the brutal Thunderer enjoy the sights.

When Pluto declares in the last line that Jupiter will delight in the spectacle of these horrific sights,<sup>78</sup> he could be speaking ironically, meaning that in fact they will represent a punishment of Jupiter in retaliation for his perceived invasion into the underworld. But two factors lead to the opposite conclusion. First, Pluto says that the Furies will envy the slaughter he is about to produce (*inuideantque Sorores*). Because, as we have seen,

78. A thought put more subtly at the beginning of the cited passage, 8.67: Pluto says that he will produce gruesome sights that "the sky has never seen before" (*quod nondum uiderit aether*), and "the sky" is of course synonymous with Jupiter himself.



Statius provides an insistent parallel between Jupiter and Tisiphone, we can expect that he might share her tastes. Secondly, Pluto contrives these scenes as something that he himself will admire (*mirer*), after which the narrator assimilates the two divine brothers, even attributing to Pluto Jupiter's characteristic earthshaking nod of final decision:

dixerat: atque illi iamdudum regia tristis  
 attremittit oranti, suaque et quae desuper arguet  
 nutabat tellus: non fortius aethera uultu  
 torquet et astriferos inclinat Iuppiter axes.  
 —(8.80–83)

He spoke, and the gloomy palace had long been trembling at his words; his own land and that which presses from above was tottering. Not more powerfully does Jupiter twist heaven with his frown and bend the starry poles.

Pluto resembles Jupiter because both will indeed enjoy the violent sights Pluto has prepared. Indeed, when Pluto tells Tisiphone to “show us an abomination” (*ede nefas*, 8.68), he uses the common term for producing spectacles at Rome (*ede*).<sup>79</sup> Pluto already knows that the descent of Amphiaraus into his kingdom does not represent any true incursion by the gods of the upper world into his realm, but he uses this specious concern as an excuse to produce a spectacle that both he and his like-minded brother will enjoy.<sup>80</sup>

### *Jupiter's Calculation*

Jupiter serves his voracious desire for violent spectacle with the careful calculation characteristic of a mercantile disposition, as we see in his

79. Lovatt 2005, 274.

80. Bernstein 2004, 66, argues that “Jupiter’s refusal to watch the duel between Polynices and Eteocles invalidates Dis’s assumption that he would take pleasure in observing it (*iuuat ista ferum spectare Tonantem*, 8.74).” It is clear, however, from Jupiter’s message to Mars in Book 7 and from his similarity to Pluto here that Jupiter does take pleasure in observing violence: Pluto knows his brother. Jupiter’s abstention from viewing the final duel is a matter of temporary satiety when faced with the greater crime of fratricide, rather than simple indifference. We must judge Jupiter’s explanation that he needs to protect Astrea and the Dioscuri from the horrifying spectacle (11.132–33) in light of his tendency to conceal his libidinal motivations under the veil of justice, demonstrated in his different speeches on the war to Mercury and Dionysus at the beginning of Book 7.

interview with Bacchus in Book 7. After Jupiter sends Mercury to Mars, Bacchus arrives to complain about the imminent destruction of Thebes. Although in Book 1 Jupiter represents himself as the judge of mortal transgressions, he now protests to Bacchus that he is wholly subject to fate like everyone else (*immoto deducimur orbe/fatorum*, 7.197–98). Despite the gruesome instructions he just sent to Mars, Jupiter also claims that he takes great pains to spare the spilling of human blood (*cui tanta quies irarum aut sanguinis usus/parcior humani?*, 7.199–200). And, indeed, he goes so far as to argue that he must come to the defense of *pietas* and *fides* (*rogat hoc . . . / . . . pietas et laesa fides*, 7.216–17).<sup>81</sup>

Jupiter reveals his hypocrisy in attempting to rationalize a war he starts, in part for his own satisfaction, as necessary for the upholding of justice.<sup>82</sup> But he shows a willingness to calculate mortal suffering in terms of his own expenditure and loss. Jupiter tells Bacchus that in times past he allowed the Lapiths to be slaughtered by Mars and the Calydonians by Diana only with great reluctance, since these deaths represented a loss for him too:

quin etiam inuitus magna ulciscendaque passis  
aut Lapithas Marti aut ueterem Calydona Dianae  
expugnare dedi: meaque est iactura pigetque  
tot mutare animas, tot reddere corpora uitae.<sup>83</sup>  
—(7.203–6)

It was unwillingly even that I gave the Lapiths to Mars to destroy or ancient Calydon to Diana, though they had suffered great wrongs that cried for vengeance. It is my loss and it irks me to shift so many souls and return so many bodies to life.

Jupiter complains about the necessity of joining bodies and souls together to make new mortals in order to replace those who have died. He then cites his own past restraint in not punishing the Thebans, whom, he says, he is now compelled to kill:

81. Jupiter seems mainly to judge an action “impious” by the extent to which it threatens to harm him directly, as when he calls Capaneus’s assault on the heavens *impia bella*, 11.123.

82. Davis 1994, 477.

83. In line 205, the majority of the best manuscripts read *mea est*. Others have *meaque est*, accepted by several editors, although both Hill and Shackleton Bailey print *nimia est*. The notion that this is Jupiter’s loss is confirmed by *piget*.

ast ego non proprio diros impendo dolori  
 Oedipodionidas: rogat hoc tellusque polusque  
 et pietas et laesa fides Naturaque et ipsi  
 Eumenidum mores.  
 —(7.215–18)

But I do not sacrifice the fell sons of Oedipus to my private wrath. Earth and heaven demand it, and piety and violated faith and Nature and the very morals of of the Eumenides.

By origin, the word which Jupiter uses for his own losses from mortal deaths, *iactura* in line 205, refers to a commercial loss at sea (items that had to be “thrown” overboard).<sup>84</sup> The word *impendo* in line 215 has the primary meanings “to pay out,” “spend,” or “waste.”<sup>85</sup> Jupiter thus claims he is not “spending” the sons of Oedipus to assuage his own pain (*proprio dolori*).

The mercantile attitude toward mortal lives implicit in the words *iactura* and *impendo* confirms the impression that Jupiter protests a bit too much and so undermines his own assertion that he is not having the Thebans killed for his own benefit. We know from his commands to Mars that he actually anticipates the pleasure to be derived from these deaths, but here we see him reckoning this reward against the effort he must expend. Jupiter’s protestation to Bacchus that he will suffer by mortal deaths thus appears casuistic. When Jupiter claims that he is not having the Thebans killed *proprio dolori*, he seems to deny that he is attempting to satisfy his own anger at mortal transgressions. But it is also true that Jupiter is indeed inflicting these deaths not “for his own pain” (the literal reading of *proprio dolori*), but for his pleasure, namely the *uoluptas* in violence that he shares with Mars. This is the reason he chooses to “spend” Theban lives, even though it will “cost” him the effort of replacing them.<sup>86</sup>

84. OLD, s.v. *iactura*, 1.

85. OLD, s.v. *impendo*.

86. My reading of Jupiter thus differs substantially from that of Hill 1996b, who argues against Feeney 1991, 353, and Dominik 1994 that Statius presents “a bumbling and ineffective Jupiter who retain[s] the outward paraphernalia of power but none of its substance” (35). Hill argues that Jupiter has little control over larger events. So, he reasons, if Statius presents several causes for the war, only one of them can be operative: although Jupiter says he is responsible for the war (*belli mihi semina sunt*o, 1.243; *iam semina pugnae/ipse dedi*, 3.235), “there can be no doubt that the real cause was Tisiphone” (39). This seems to me to be a reductive treatment of the complex of causes typical in epic narrative, a persuasive account of which is given in Davis 1994. Hill also argues that Jupiter has little personal power. When Capaneus as-

*Coroebus*

Jupiter's word *iactura* recalls, and effectively confirms, criticism that had earlier been leveled against the gods in the same terms by Coroebus, the central figure in an etiological tale told by Adrastus.<sup>87</sup> The Argive king Adrastus explains to his guests Polynices and Tydeus the meaning of the celebration of Apollo they are attending. He relates how Apollo took vengeance on the Argives for allowing the son of a girl he had raped to be accidentally killed. In response to this death, Apollo sends a monster to devour Argive children as they sleep. The young Coroebus slays the monster, prompting Apollo to send a plague whose only remedy, according to Apollo's oracle, will be the deaths of Coroebus and his band. Undaunted, Coroebus presents himself at the temple of Apollo to suffer the god's judgment. He declares that he is willing to die to save Argos, but he also questions the gods' motivation for the violence and death the Argives have endured:

quod si monstra effera magnis  
cara adeo superis, iacturaque uilior orbi  
mors hominum, et saeuo tanta inclementia caelo est,  
quid meruere Argi? me, me, diuum optime, solum  
obicisse caput Fatis praestabat. an illud  
lene magis cordi quod desolata domorum

saults the heavens, Statius tells us that the act is like the assault of the Giants upon Olympus (10.850–52). Hill notes that Jupiter is described in this simile as *trepidum* and says that this is “the clearest signal of how we are to think of Jupiter here.” But this simile describes Capaneus as he begins his assault. When Jupiter decides he has had enough, he is hardly fearful; rather, he laughs at Capaneus and shakes his locks in the traditional gesture of divine royal power (*risit et incussa sanctarum mole comarum*, 10.908), then blasts Capaneus from the wall with a thunderbolt. The fear of the other gods only highlights Jupiter's confidence. Statius's Jupiter is not the cosmic force allied with fate that we find in the *Aeneid*, but neither is he bumbling and ineffective. Instead, he is like a powerful mortal king who changes course at will. Bernstein 2004, 67, argues similarly that Jupiter “has neither justification nor power at his disposal,” citing Jupiter's complaint at 1.214–18 that his thunderbolt is insufficient to check mortal crimes. But we cannot take Jupiter's words at face value here, for we see in his speeches to Mercury and Dionysus at the opening of Book 7 that he uses the pretense of enforcing justice to conceal his delight in slaughter. In his representation of Jupiter, Statius has expanded upon a less emphatic, if still real, tendency in Vergil's Jupiter to present his part in producing war differently to different gods (*Aen.* 1.261–64, 10.8–10). On this issue in the *Aeneid*, see Thomas 2005, 144–45, with further references. In the *Thebaid*, Jupiter has the power to suppress mortal crimes but generally does not care to.

87. 1.557–661. For references to various interpretations of this scene see Ganiban 2007, 10 n. 48. McNelis 2007, 25–49, explores how the questioning of the divine order in this episode, especially through deviations from epic precedents, amounts to a critique of imperial control at Rome.

tecta uides, ignique datis cultoribus omnis  
 lucet ager?  
 —(I.648–55)

But if savage monsters are so dear to the great gods and the world can more easily sacrifice the lives of men, if the cruel heavens are so merciless, what has Argos deserved? Better that I, I only, best of the dieties, should have offered my head to the Fates. Or does that gentle way please you rather, to see home desolate and all the land alight with husbandmen given to fire?

Apollo eventually yields to the courage and reasoning of Coroebus and refrains from taking the youth's life or visiting further punishment upon the Argives. The banquet at which Adrastus tells the story thus follows two settlements. Apollo and the Argives ultimately made peace, according to Adrastus's tale, as did Polynices and Tydeus after Adrastus stopped their quarrel. In contrast to the poem's other banquets, this celebration is a site of reconciliation, consistent with the generosity of the Argive Adrastus.

Although at the conclusion of Adrastus's tale Apollo may feel an "awe of slaughter" (*reuerentia caedis*, I.662) that stays his vengeance, the questions raised by Coroebus about the motivations of the gods will only become more urgent as the poem progresses after Book 1.<sup>88</sup> Despite Apollo's last-minute change of mind, in his treatment of the Argives he shows himself to be as destructively indifferent toward mortals as Jupiter appears in his commands to Mars. Apollo seeks vengeance for a problem that he himself has caused, effectively meting out punishment upon others that he should endure himself. Jupiter acts similarly in punishing mortals for acting upon a disposition that he himself has given them.<sup>89</sup>

Coroebus skillfully identifies the divine calculation of violence and uses this charge to shame Apollo into desisting in his destruction in Argos. Coroebus asks whether monsters like the one that has ravaged the Argives are "so dear" (*cara adeo*) to the gods that the mortal deaths they cause seem "a cheaper loss" (*iacturaque uilior*). Coroebus intends this as a rhetorical question implying that the gods surely cannot think this way and presents an implicit contrast here with his own *pietas*, which he himself asserts (*pietas*, I.644) and Adrastus confirms (*pia arma*, I.638). He takes a similar approach in offering his own life on behalf of the other

88. Dominik 1994, 63, 68–69.

89. Ahl 1986, 2854; Davis 1994, 481.

Argives. If the gods will refuse to accept his self-sacrifice for the group, could it be, he asks, that it is more pleasant to their hearts (*lene magis cordi*) to see houses made desolate? Or to see the fields lit up with “farmers given over to the flames” (*ignisque datis cultoribus*) of their funeral pyres? Apollo, who had until this point unhesitatingly persecuted the Argives, is moved by Coroebus’s questions, feels awe at his vision of destruction and the harm he has already done (*reuerentia caedis*), and relents. But Jupiter’s later deliberations, linked to this scene by his use of the word *iactura*, suggest that he might take Coroebus’s questions not as rhetorical, but as genuinely worth considering: how much effort *does* it cost to bring a monster from the depths, and how much pleasure can the spectacle of its rampage provide before mortals kill it?<sup>90</sup>

### *Menoceus*

The gods’ desire for violence explains why they will not be placated by a representative sacrifice but instead demand the slaughter of many. Coroebus manages through skillful argument to save himself and his community from further destruction, though only after considerable suffering and loss. But his success in the inset narrative about the past in Argos contrasts starkly with the outcomes of the main narrative concerning Thebes. Here the gods generally demand the destruction of both the victim and those the sacrifice should save. Jupiter follows the sacrificial logic of one *and* many, rather than one *for* many, when he decides to stage a full-scale war in order to punish the offending leaders of Argos and Thebes.

The same logic governs the most spectacular attempt by a mortal to placate the gods, the ritual self-sacrifice (*deuotio*) of Menoeceus (10.449–826).<sup>91</sup> His fellow Thebans support Menoeceus’s attempt to end the war through *deuotio*; they call him a god who will bring them peace (*auctorem pacis seruatoremque deumque*, 10.684). Yet his sacrifice has no effect: the war continues just as it had, with Capaneus immediately storming the very section of the Theban city wall from which Menoeceus fell (10.845–47).<sup>92</sup> The futility of Menoeceus’s sacrifice highlights the impossibility of ending recurring violence at Thebes and reflects the belief that

90. The exposure of the mercantile calculation of the gods here leads me to agree with Ganiban 2007, 12–13, against Hill 1989, 115, and others (see references at Ganiban 2007, 12 n. 62) that Apollo hesitates to kill Coroebus not out of *pietas*, but simply out of shame.

91. On the relationship between suicides in Flavian epic and the practice of suicide at Rome more generally, see McGuire 1997 and Ripoll 1998, 373–424.

92. Fantham 1995; Heinrich 1999, 187; and Ganiban 2007, 145.

Rome itself was caught in an inescapable cycle of violence.<sup>93</sup> But Statius also uses the language of economic ethics to suggest explanations for this recurrence.

Courageous as he may be, Menoeceus fails where Coroebus succeeds because, unlike Coroebus, he does not fully understand, and so cannot rhetorically manipulate, the gods' view of violence against mortals. His misunderstanding is evident in his final address to Apollo and the gods of war:

armorum superi, tuque o qui funere tanto  
indulges mihi, Phoebе, mori, date gaudia Thebis,  
quae pepigi et toto quae sanguine prodigus emi.  
—(10.762–64)

Gods of war and you, O Phoebus, who grant me to die so great a death,  
give to Thebes the joy that I have contracted for and bought with the  
lavishing of all my blood.

In his request that his life be taken in exchange for sparing Thebes, Menoeceus uses the language of pleasure and commerce. He asks that the joys (*gaudia*) of peace which he has contracted for (*pepigi*) and buys at the high price (*prodigus emi*) of his own blood be granted to Thebes. He continues with the language of contracting and buying a few lines later when he requests that the gods of battle and Apollo pay (*pro me persoluite*, 10.772) Thebes if they are happy with his obedience in becoming their victim.

The commodity language in Menoeceus's speech reflects the wording of the gods' demand for sacrifice. When Tiresias announces that the youngest royal Theban must die in return for victory, he tells the Theban people that the victim should be pleased with a death exchanged "for such a great reward" (*felix, qui tanta lucem mercede relinquet*, 10.615). Divine Virtus similarly reports that the gods demand the life of one Theban in exchange for preserving the blood of all (*terrigenam cuncto patriae pro sanguine poscunt*, 10.668). By using similar terms, Menoeceus shows that he has taken the injunction from the gods as the contract it appears to be. But when he accepts this bargain rather than questioning its basis, Menoeceus fails to force a reconsideration, as Coroebus did, and the gods therefore

93. Heinrich 1999, 191–93.

proceed with business as usual. Because their agreement serves an insatiable desire, it will be drastically one-sided, much like the contracts of Vergil's Juno: the gods will appropriate the *gaudia* Menoeceus seeks for Thebes as their own *uoluptas*.

The narrator later sums up Menoeceus's fate as *impensus patriae* (11.653): he was "spent," or rather "wasted" (two meanings of *impensus*), in an attempt to benefit Thebes. The word *impensus* implicates Jupiter, who spoke to Bacchus of "spending" (*impendo*, 7.215–16) the lives of Thebans. Reflecting on her loss, Menoeceus's mother further suggests that the gods drove Menoeceus to act out a horrific mime of their own consuming desire for violent spectacle.<sup>94</sup> His love of death (*mortis amor*), she says, could only have come from Mars, not from her:

unde hic mortis amor? quae sacra insania menti?  
 quosue ego conceptus aut quae male pignora fudi  
 tam diuersa mihi? nimirum Martius anguis,  
 quaeque nouis proauum tellus effloruit armis—  
 hinc animi tristes nimiusque in pectore Mauors,  
 et de matre nihil.  
 —(10.804–9)

Whence this love of death? What accursed madness entered your mind?  
 What did I conceive, what children did I put forth to my sorrow, so unlike myself? Surely it was Mars's snake and earth flowering with our forebears' newborn arms—hence that sinister courage, hence all too much of Mavors in your heart and nothing from your mother.

Mars has effectively possessed Menoeceus (*nimiusque in pectore Mauors*) much as Apollo possesses his seers, leading him to act in ways unfamiliar even to his own mother. Menoeceus therefore engages in a perverse sort of consumption:

94. Seneca provides a precedent for the gods' enjoyment of this sort of dramatic suicide in his description of the younger Cato's fate. Seneca writes that the gods caused Cato's first suicide attempt to fail so that they could witness the Stoic paragon seeking his death a second time (*Prou.* 2.11–12). Seneca's gods derive pleasure from witnessing consummate *uirtus* face the greatest adversity. The gods of the *Thebaid* take a similar pleasure from the spectacle of violence itself. Erren 1970 describes the ways in which the events of the *Thebaid*, and in particular its violent events, are presented as a typical Roman entertainment. But he sees the gods of the *Thebaid* as detached spectators of these events rather than closely engaged in them.



uiden ut iugulo consumpserit ensem?  
 altius haud quisquam Danaum mucrone subisset.  
 —(10.813–14)

See how he devoured the sword with his throat? None of the Danai  
 would have gone down deeper with the blade.

The description of Menoeceus “consuming his sword with his throat” recalls the sort of subject-object reversal in violent scenes typical of Lucan, where, for instance, a commander tells his soldiers to “blunt the enemy’s swords with their necks.”<sup>95</sup> In both Lucan and Statius, warriors bring their bodies to the injuring weapons rather than the weapons attacking bodies, but here Statius develops Lucan’s descriptive technique in a different direction. He retains the disconcerting effect of the subject-object reversal, but whereas Lucan uses the figure to create warriors bizarrely indifferent to the suffering their bodies endure at the hands of others,<sup>96</sup> Statius uses it to produce a representation of suicide as a burst of self-destructive appetite. The war gods have the pleasure of experiencing vicariously what it would be like to turn the desire for violence against oneself, suffering and inflicting pain simultaneously in equal measure.

Although the Thebans see Menoeceus’s life as wasted (*impensus*), from the perspective of the gods it was well spent (*impensus*), because, as we know, Jupiter and Mars, who possesses Menoeceus, both enjoy such spectacles and here need give nothing in return. Menoeceus has acted with *pietas* toward the gods by honoring their contract (*pius*, 10.756) and for this reason is caught by Pietas along with Virtus as he falls (10.780), but his gesture is not reciprocated. His father, Creon, urged Menoeceus to observe *pietas* toward his family (*pietas*, 10.711, 736), but he unwisely chooses to sacrifice himself to the faithless gods.

### Niobe

Coroebus and Menoeceus each use the language of reckoning lives in an appeal for divine clemency, but their different fates demonstrate the perils of entering into the dynamics of such calculations. The Argive youth suc-

95. *iugulisque retundite ferrum*, 6.161. For Lucan’s use of this rhetorical figure, see Bartsch 1997, 23–29.

96. Including others granting them a suicide they seek: 4.560–62.

ceeds where the Theban fails not only because of his different rhetorical strategy, but also because violent consumption is the particular problem of Thebes. This is why the city is, in Jupiter's words, "so ready to offend the gods."<sup>97</sup> Apollo, who yields to the courage of the Argive Coroeus, helps to squander the equally courageous Theban Menoeceus by allowing him to die without fulfilling his prayer for peace. We are thus not surprised to learn that in the past the god vigorously punished a Theban who not only meddled in the divine sphere by counting up lives, but did so in an openly insulting manner. This is Niobe, who was foolish enough to compare her fourteen children with Leto's two, the twins Apollo and Diana.

Statius makes Niobe a defining figure in Theban history by referring to her repeatedly throughout the *Thebaid*.<sup>98</sup> He often emphasizes the counting or consumption of human life as part of Niobe's story, twice with striking uses of the word *consumo*. When comparing the funeral of Archemorus to that of Niobe's children, the narrator speaks of Niobe as having been "consumed by the twin quivers" of Apollo and Diana (*geminis Niobe consumpta pharetris*, 6.124) and refers to the hill where Diana stands to shoot the killer of Parthenopaeus as the place where she had formerly bared her breast in Amazon fashion and "consumed fecund Niobe with her weary bow" (*saevis ubi quondam exserta sagittis/fecundam lasso Nioben consumpserat arcui*, 9.681–82). Given what we have observed so far, we are not surprised to see mortals "consumed" by the gods. Niobe herself is not the victim of violence, but Leto's twins use up her life just as effectively by killing all of her children, in the process draining her life and turning her to stone.

Niobe invites this punishment by challenging the gods in a particularly offensive way, and Statius brings out the nature of this offense in two passages that precede those just cited. After Tydeus has killed the band of Thebans sent by Eteocles to ambush him, an old man named Aletes says that only one other disaster in Theban history could equal it: the gods' vengeance on Niobe (3.191–206). He describes Niobe's attempt to bury her children in the aftermath:

una dies similis fato specieque malorum  
 aequa fuit, qua magniloquos luit impia flatus

97. Jupiter tells Bacchus *scis ipse (ut crimina mittam/Dorica) quam promptae superos incessere Thebae*, 7.208–9, where Jupiter emphasizes Theban over Argive offenses.

98. Discussion of each of these passages follows. See Davis 1994 on Statius's concern with Theban and Argive history throughout the poem.

Tantalus, innumeris cum circumfusa ruinis  
 corpora tot raperet terra, tot quaereret ignes.  
 —(3.192–94)

One day was like this in doom and equal in aspect of calamity, the day Tantalus' daughter expiated her prideful vaunts and encompassed by ruin past count snatched all those bodies from the earth, sought all those fires.

We later encounter Niobe among the retinue of Theban ghosts called forth by Tiresias and his priestess-daughter, Manto, to foretell the future of their city. Manto describes Niobe and her children as they come into view:

ecce autem magna subit inuidiosa caterua  
 Tantalus et tumido percenset funera luctu,  
 nil deiecta malis; iuuat effugisse deorum  
 numina et insanae plus iam permittere linguae.  
 —(4.575–78)

And see! Tantalus's daughter comes to be envied for her long train, and counts over her bodies in arrogant mourning, no wise downcast by her woes; she rejoices to have escaped the power of the gods and to give more licence now to her crazy tongue.

In both of these passages, Statius draws attention to the act of reckoning lives at the heart of Niobe's crime. Whereas Niobe had brazenly counted off her children to compare them to Leto's, in the first passage we see her surrounded by bodies that she cannot count, *innumeris . . . ruinis*, that have been "spilled out around her" (she is *circumfusa*), and she struggles to gather up the "numerous" bodies and find sufficient pyres for them (*tot . . . tot*). Once she is safely in the underworld, however, Niobe is not at all dismayed by her fortunes (*nil deiecta malis*) and returns to proudly "counting up" her the spirits of her dead children (*tumido percenset funera luctu*).

On one level, Niobe's offense is simply that she asserted her superiority over the mother of two powerful gods according to the greatest index of a woman's social worth in the Roman world, fertility. But Niobe's situation also resonates with Statius's larger theme of consumption leading to violence. In this sense, Niobe pointedly offends the gods because she

usurps their role in counting mortal lives. By ostentatiously numbering her children, Niobe declares that they exist and will continue to exist as a credit to her. When she tallies up her children to her own account, Niobe effectively asserts that the gods are not free to reckon her children in their own calculations as mortals who can be wounded and killed. The gods of course waste no time in proving her wrong.

With her counting, Niobe also draws attention to the difficult fact that she and other women can bear the mortal offspring that the gods need but cannot themselves easily produce. The gods depend upon the continued reproduction of mortals so their deaths can provide the sport that Mars enjoys when he luxuriates in the blood of his Thracians, or that Jupiter partakes of during the war for Thebes. And it is tiresome enough, according to Jupiter, to join up souls with bodies so that new mortals can come into being (7.205–6). Although the gods are happy to have sex with mortals when they please, they have no interest in producing the whole race. All the same, the gods do not want to be reminded of their dependence, and this is just what Niobe does by advertising the great number of children she has given birth to. She claims that she can count up what she makes and continue to see the number grow; the gods only care to count up what they destroy. This opposition is implicit in the description of Diana killing Niobe's children: *saevis ubi quondam exserta sagittis/fecundam lasso Nioben consumpserat arcui* (9.681–82). Diana's action asserts that although the gods' ability to consume life may depend upon mortal reproduction, in the end the consumption of the gods (*consumpserat*) will always savagely (*saevis sagittis*) trump mortal reproduction (*fecundam Nioben*), even if it takes some effort (*lasso arcui*).<sup>99</sup>

Statius adds a telling detail to this description of Niobe's fate when he describes Diana as *exserta*. The parallels with Vergil's Penthesilea and Camilla suggest that *exserta* means Diana has one breast exposed in the manner of an Amazon in order to shoot more easily.<sup>100</sup> But when the virgin goddess exposes a warrior's breast to the fecund mother Niobe, she is also mockingly asserting the superiority of the destructive power of her divine warcraft over the productive power of mortal Niobe's fertility. In a very real sense, Niobe's children "consume" her by nursing, but in a manner

99. This is another example of gods tiring themselves out with killing, along with Jupiter's weariness at 1.216–17.

100. Dewar 1991 ad 9.681. The parallel passages are: Penthesilea, *Aen.* 1.492; Camilla, 11.648, 11.803.

that leaves her alive and vital and helps her offspring survive and grow. By exposing her breast as a female warrior, Diana implicitly refutes Niobe's use of the breast, demonstrating that her divine ability to destroy trumps Niobe's fertility.<sup>101</sup>

Niobe, like Coroebus and Menoeceus, faces the consumption and spending of the gods, and each of these characters brings out an important facet of this violence when contrasted with the other two. Unlike Coroebus and Menoeceus, Niobe offends the gods directly and so, by seeing her children killed before she dies, suffers on a greater scale. She alone confronts the gods with an alternative, productive form of consumption. Coroebus, in contrast to Niobe and Menoeceus, is an Argive. He shows a rhetorical dexterity that the Thebans cannot match in managing the gods' disposition toward violence. Finally, and most significantly, Menoeceus plays an important role in the main narrative of the *Thebaid*, while Coroebus and Niobe appear respectively in a digression and occasional references. The experience of Menoeceus is thus most representative of what will occur in the central events of the *Thebaid*, for which the episodes of Coroebus and Niobe provide comment and contrast. The mortals of the main narrative will not succeed as Coroebus does in mastering divine consumption and spending, nor will they present alternative forms of productive consumption as Niobe does. Instead, like Menoeceus, they will attempt in vain to control violent consumption and bring only further destruction.

### *Violent Consumption: Conclusions*

Overseeing all of these interactions between mortals and the celestial divinities is Jupiter himself. In contrast with Vergil, Statius presents no other Olympian as a significantly independent instigator of violence. Juno, who has this role in the *Aeneid*, is transformed in the *Thebaid* into an agent of reconciliation;<sup>102</sup> her appetite for violence is transferred to Jupiter. Neither Juno nor any other Olympian who trembles as Jupiter enters his halls (1.202) or cowers behind him as Capaneus assaults the heavens

101. Statius later presents this same contrast in the context of mourning. When Argia consoles herself with the survival of her son after Polynices' death at 12.347 she emphasizes "the female as . . . the positive, generative half of humanity, giving birth rather than causing death" (Lovatt 1999, 138).

102. Statius's Juno on balance has no greater success with her causes than does Vergil's. She is, however, the one divinity who participates in the reconciliation of the poem's final book, assisting the Argive women in their petition at Athens (12.464–70). See Feeney 1991, 354, 357.

(10.910–11) has anything like the freedom of action of Vergil's Juno. Mars acts as Jupiter's agent, while Apollo and Diana lack substantively independent identities. As we have seen, Statius also shifts the practice of calculation in violence from Pluto to Jupiter.

Given the disposition of Jupiter we have observed so far, it is hardly surprising that he is not particularly responsive to prayers from his subjects. Jupiter will act on calls for vengeance, such as that of Oedipus, because they involve bloodshed. The same river god who fights with Hippomedon, Ismenos, calls upon Jupiter for his help in clearing his stream of fallen warriors. He invokes his past service to Jupiter, when he took the risk of aiding Jupiter's illicit amours (*totiens hospesque tuis et conscius actis*, 9.422) and provided for his offspring (*praecipuosque alui natorum*, 9.426). Ismenos ends by accusing both Jupiter and Jupiter's offspring of holding *gratia* "cheap": *an uilis et illis/gratia!*, 9.426–27. The response from Jupiter? Silence. Later, Creon sacrifices to Jupiter after the death of Capaneus, thinking that Jupiter had ended the conflict by defeating the Argives with his thunderbolt. But he makes the sacrifice in vain (*nequiquam*, 11.206): Jupiter was not at the altar and allows the prayer to be transmitted to Tisiphone (11.207–8). Creon mistakenly imagines that Jupiter looks with *gratia* (*gratus/respicis*, 11.217–18) upon his Theban descendants, but the sacrifice is fouled and miscarries. Jupiter may contemplate with anticipation mortals bleeding on the battlefield and imploring his name (*implorantesque Tonantem*, 7.24), but his desire for violent consumption and consequent mercantile disposition put him beyond any system of *gratia* that would lead him to intervene on their behalf. Possessed of absolute power, he is not obliged to respond to claims of *pietas*, nor is he so disposed by nature.

### Reciprocity in Retreat

Despite Jupiter's influence, *pietas* in the form of reciprocal values does not disappear entirely from the poem. We have already seen, from figures such as Coroebus and Ismenos, sporadic reassertions of reciprocal values in the face of divine hostility or indifference. Scholars have demonstrated that *pietas* in the *Thebaid* tends to be directed either toward the family or, in an altruistic way, toward humanity at large, while demonstrations of *pietas* toward the gods are rare. These changes correspond to a general redefinition of *pietas* apparent in all Flavian epics. *Pietas* becomes less a value practiced in ritual behavior toward the gods than a private rectitude

that inspires divine favor.<sup>103</sup> In other words, *pietas* is no longer bound up with reciprocal practices but becomes a matter of the disposition of the individual.

Statius makes *pietas* undergo this transformation over the course of the *Thebaid*. In the beginning of the poem, we encounter Adrastus, the sole major character who engages significantly in reciprocal practices. He quickly loses influence as reciprocity cedes ground to the desire for consumption and to mercantile behavior. At the close of the poem, reciprocal *pietas* reasserts itself in more personal and private forms. *Pietas* and *clementia* are sublimated into allegorical qualities, and the women who attempt to restore social norms after the devastation of the war reclaim reciprocal values for the personal sphere.

### *Adrastus*

The Argive king Adrastus, who accepts the exiled Polynices and Tydeus and helps them wage war against Thebes, engages vigorously in and respects his reciprocal obligations. He enters into a relationship of *hospitium* (*hospitiis*, 1.682) with Polynices and Tydeus after each comes as a refugee to his door.<sup>104</sup> He advocates *pietas* to Polynices by arguing that the criminal actions of one's ancestors cannot destroy the fundamental *pietas* of a family (1.690). Adrastus considers his ties of *hospitium* when contemplating what an alliance with these two warriors will mean (*inceptaque uersat/hospitia*, 2.146–47). He creates a bond with both by offering them his daughters in marriage, daughters he refers to as “happy pledges of grandchildren” (*nepotum/laeta fides*, 2.158–59). Once he has formed this bond, Adrastus remains loyal to Polynices and Tydeus throughout the poem. Despite his reluctance to join a war for Thebes, he yields to the entreaties of his daughter Argia, now the wife of Polynices, and gives her the “somber gift” (*inlaetabile munus*, 3.706) of warfare that she requests on behalf of her husband. Adrastus deserts his son-in-law Polynices only when he cannot persuade him to abstain from the grossest possible violation of *pietas* (*sceleris*, 11.425), a duel to the death with his brother (11.424–46). Adrastus promises to reward Hypsipyle with spoils in return for the water she provides to the Argive troops (*donabere praeda*, 4.769), and we learn elsewhere that he has received a horse as a gift from the gods (*dono*, 6.314).

103. Ripoll 1998, 256, 289, 292–94.

104. Polynices sees himself as a “guest” (*hospes*, 3.374) of Adrastus, and Argia speaks of the bonds of *hospitia* (3.699) between Adrastus and Polynices.

Adrastus thus approaches the ideal of the generous man, a circumstance highlighted during his feast in honor of Apollo. As we have seen, this is the one meal in the poem where generosity takes precedence over violence.<sup>105</sup> The tale he tells of Coroebus recalls a rare instance of gods restraining themselves from deadly retribution against mortals. In the Coroebus story, the gods even act with a certain generosity, belated and grudging as it may be, when Apollo “grants Coroebus the honor of life” (*honorem/largitur uitae*, 1.663–64). By holding such a feast, Adrastus continues his attempt to engage the gods in beneficial reciprocal relations despite their earlier hostility to Coroebus and the Argives of his generation. Indeed, Adrastus addresses Apollo in such a way as to remind him of his reciprocal obligations when he invokes the god with the words *o memor hospitii* (1.716).

Adrastus deviates from his pattern of engaging in ideal reciprocal exchange just once, when he offers his daughters as the “reward” or “payment” to Tydeus and Polynices after their brawl on his doorstep: *haec illa uenit post uerbera merces*, 2.172. It seems odd that Adrastus would conceive of giving a reward for this near-lethal confrontation when he had earlier said that it was beyond the bounds of anything his own citizens would dare do.<sup>106</sup> Adrastus’s choice of language may be determined by his audience: the word *merces* is appropriate when appealing to two men who have so little sense of *hospitium* that they nearly kill one another for a dry place to sleep. Yet Adrastus’s words are also prescient. Elsewhere, he unwittingly alludes to the coming civil war, such as when he mistakenly tells Polynices that he can escape the grim fate of his ancestors.<sup>107</sup> Adrastus’s use of the word *merces* also looks forward with dramatic irony to the coming conflict. Just as he rewards Tydeus and Polynices for their brawl, Jupiter and Eteocles will seek measurable rewards from the conflict they produce.

105. Adrastus’s feast, hospitality, and tale recall Evander’s reception of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8 and the strong ties of *hospitium* he forms with the Trojan leader. The generosity of Adrastus, patriarch of Argos, stands out by contrast with the behavior of Oedipus, patriarch of Thebes, at another feast. While the Thebans are celebrating the death of Amphiaras, Oedipus staggers in, foul and cross, delighting not in the company but in his proximity to the ongoing war and bloodshed (*tantum bella iuuant*, 8.251).

106. *neque enim meus audeat istas/ciuis in usque manus*, 1.439–40.

107. For a discussion of Adrastus’s error, with further references, see McNelis 2007, 40–44. Ganiban 2007, 22–23, 169–70, argues that Adrastus is out of step in the *Thebaid* because he believes that the practice of *pietas* is still efficacious.



*Amphiaraus*

At the opening of the poem, Adrastus establishes a standard of reciprocal behavior that neither he nor others can live up to. His engagement in *hospitium* and advocacy of *pietas* remain unique, and even he finds little scope to practice such reciprocity before and during the war. Yet, even if active expressions of reciprocal behavior are rare, some characters commit themselves to a restricted ideal of reciprocal *pietas*, as when Coroebus demonstrates his belief in manifest or implicit reciprocal ties. He and others forgo *hospitium*, gift giving, sacrifices, and the like, and instead exercise *pietas* as internal fidelity to understood ties of allegiance.

Among the poem's major characters, the warrior-priest Amphiaraus adopts this new form of *pietas* most evidently. Repeatedly described as *pious*, he suffers directly from mercantile behavior when his wife, Eriphyle, betrays him for gold. By contrast with his wife, Amphiaraus represents the limited efficacy of *pietas* in an environment dominated by consumption and mercantile calculation. Amphiaraus shows his *pietas* primarily to Apollo, the god he serves. He is called *pious* when he intervenes to reconcile the family of the dead Opheltis with Hypsipyle (*pious Oeclides*, 5.731), an intervention initiated because Opheltis' father, Lycurgus, has come from sacrificing and still wears the fillets of priesthood, which Amphiaraus respects as similar to his own (*sociae ueritus commercia uitae/Amphiaraus*, 5.668–69). Apollo calls Amphiaraus *pious* twice elsewhere (6.374, 6.378). Amphiaraus remains faithful to Apollo throughout the poem, but apart from showing his respect for Lycurgus, he is not said to act with *pietas* toward other mortals. Indeed, he can go to the opposite extreme. In the *aristeia* just before his death, Amphiaraus “burns with insatiate love of savage war” (*ardet inexplēto saeui Mauortis amore*, 7.703) and grinds down the bodies of other warriors with the “impious axle” (*impius axis*, 7.763) of his chariot. Amphiaraus is guided here by his tutelary god, Apollo, who provides him with a final “hollow glory” (*decus . . . inane*, 7.692) by standing in his chariot and increasing his ability to kill.

Amphiaraus knows from bitter experience with his wife, Eriphyle, how faith in reciprocal relations of *pietas* can be mislaid. The emphasis on his *pietas* toward Apollo shows him turning instead to a more distant sense of allegiance that is not contingent upon mortals who can betray it. He holds to this *pietas* even though it becomes evident that his relationship with Apollo cannot save him from a calamitous fate. The scene of his *aristeia* shows his situation in outsized form: he deserts, and even crushes and

destroys, the *pietas* of human relations (such that he becomes *impius*) in favor of the god who rides in his chariot, but this god can give him nothing of worth. For Amphiarus, *pietas* may truly be nowhere (as Tydeus earlier claims, *nusquam pietas*, 3.350) as an active practice, yet he holds to it in a different form.

The word *commercia*, used by the narrator to describe the priestly role of Amphiarus and others (*commercia uittae*, 5.668), suggests how degraded this relationship with the divine becomes when the gods are unreliable or actively hostile. With his last words in the upper world, Amphiarus calls upon whatever credit he has with Apollo to avenge the betrayal he has suffered:

nunc uoce suprema,  
si qua recessuro debetur gratia uati,  
deceptum tibi, Phoebe, larem poenasque nefandae  
coniugis et pulchrum nati commendo furorem.  
—(7.785–88)

Now with my final utterance, if any grace be due to your departing prophet, Phoebus, I commend to you my cheated hearth and the punishment of my wicked wife and the noble madness of my son.

*Gratia*, rather than creating any sort of alliance or reconciliation, can only bring the sort of retribution from above that always takes commodity form (*debetur*). Amphiarus can rely on the gods to punish Eriphyle because he knows that although they answer no prayers that bring true aid, the gods' desire to consume the pleasures of violent spectacle does lead them to answer calls for further mortal suffering. *Gratia* and *pietas* have become separated: acts of *pietas* cannot expect selfless *gratia*. Although the gods prove unwilling to participate in beneficial reciprocal exchange,<sup>108</sup> Amphiarus nevertheless honors Apollo. For him and others, *pietas* continues

108. D'Espèrey 1999, 371–72, 381, argues correctly that in the course of the poem *pietas* is redirected from relationships between mortals and gods to those between mortals. But *pietas* among mortals itself remains defective and incomplete, and *pietas* between mortals and gods does not completely disappear. On her reading, Amphiarus represents fidelity to the gods, which is rightly abandoned by characters such as Capaneus, who scorns the gods, and Coroebus, who confronts them. Both Capaneus and Coroebus thus lay claim to self-determination and justice for mortals. But we must not overlook the fact that Coroebus, unlike Capaneus, remains loyal to the idea of *pietas* between mortals and gods by presenting himself at the temple of Apollo. He even manages to evoke a (belated) reciprocal response from Apollo.

to exist as an act of personal dedication that gives meaning to individual existence.<sup>109</sup>

### *Final Pietas*

The transformation of *pietas* seen in the actions of Amphiaraus culminates in the appearance of Pietas at the close of the poem. Tiresias invokes Pietas as he decides in favor of continuing to aid Thebes (10.597); along with Virtus, Pietas softens the landing of Menoeceus when he leaps from the city wall (10.780); she then tries to intervene to prevent the duel between Eteocles and Polynices. Before this final appearance, we learn that Pietas for a long time sat isolated in the heavens:

iamdudum terris coetuque offensa deorum  
 auersa caeli Pietas in parte sedebat.  
 —(11.457–58)

Long time had Piety been sitting in a secluded part of heaven, offended  
 by earth and the company of the gods.

She is so despised, in fact, that she contemplates moving to the underworld, and she laments the fact that she has no place on earth:

"quid me," ait, "ut saevis animantum ac saepe deorum  
 obstaturam animis, princeps Natura, creabas?  
 nil iam ego per populos, nusquam reuerentia nostri."  
 —(11.465–67)

Coroebus, although removed from the main part of the narrative, lives and remains honored, while Capaneus is destroyed.

109. Lind 1992, 5-6 distinguishes an external *pietas* that constitutes respect for the gods from a "deeper, more subtle emotion" that is felt within the individual. This situation of Amphiaraus is analogous to that of the Epicurean, who looked to the gods only as models of a calm and untroubled existence, without expecting communication or aid (Lucr. 2.177–81, 3.22, 5.146–234, and 6.387–422). Rather than finding inspiration in the tranquility of the gods, however, Amphiaraus forms his ideal of *pietas* in opposition to the gods and the experience of his marriage. The companions of Amphiaraus have a similar experience after his death. They "repay" Amphiaraus with "gifts" offered at a pyre after his death (*flammas ac dona rogo tristeq; rependant/exsequias*, 8.209–10). At 8.341 Thiodamas likewise "repays" (*rependit*) the spirit of Amphiaraus with ritual deaths similar to his by burying live animals. The confused payments and gifts that should be part of social communication cannot reach him even as a dead spirit: with no body for burial, they do not even know, and wonder at, where he might be and what his fate is (*et nunc te quis casus habet?*, 8.189).

"Why did you create me, primal Nature," she says, "to oppose the fierce passions of living beings and often of gods? I am nothing now among the nations, nowhere is any reverence for me."

When she intervenes, *Pietas* begins to persuade the spectators of the duel to unite in putting a stop to it, but *Tisiphone* quickly drives her from the field.

Romans worshipped divine *Pietas*,<sup>110</sup> but when Statius emphasizes her separation from gods and mortals, he draws attention to a paradox inherent in the conception of *Pietas* as an individual deity.<sup>111</sup> In the course of the poem, *pietas* is removed from the hearts of gods and mortals through personification and then physically separated from them. Thus the very quality that is supposed to bring individuals into benign and constructive relations experiences a debilitating double isolation. This, in turn, mirrors the isolation of individuals, such as *Amphiaraus*, who seek to uphold the idea of *pietas*. Just as *Pietas* remains essentially alone despite retreating to complain to *Jupiter* (11.496), mortals are left with a truncated form of *pietas* that they can express only through a sense of personal duty, without the prospect of creating and taking part in real relationships that involve mutual reciprocal gestures.<sup>112</sup>

We find this same abbreviated *pietas* on display in the aftermath of the battle for Thebes in Book 12. *Juno* takes part in a rare moment of reciprocal giving between the gods when, after attending to the "pious" (*piis*, 12.294) Argive women making their way to Athens, she asks *Diana* as a gift (*munus breue*, 12.299) to illuminate the battlefield with her moonbeams so that Argia can find the corpse of *Polynices*. Argia, who herself referred to the recovery of the Argive dead as "pious toil" (*pio . . . labori*, 12.197), meets *Antigone* over the body of *Polynices*. *Antigone* tells Argia that she need not fear her and that her own *pietas* (12.384) is but a poor thing compared to that of a wife. Both claim that it was their *pietas* (12.459) that led them to *Polynices*. *Oedipus*, too, found *pietas* only when he touched the corpses of his sons: *tarda meam, Pietas, longo post tempore mentem/percutis!*, 11.603 ("Tardy *Piety*, after so long do you smite my soul?").<sup>113</sup> But

110. Richardson 1992, 290, and Ripoll 1998, 306.

111. For a survey of the function of allegory in the *Thebaid*, see Feeney 1991, 378–91. Ripoll 1998, 304–6, reviews epic precedents for such allegories, discusses the place of *pietas* in Roman imperial culture, and gives further references.

112. Feeney 1991, 378–79, notes that the failures of *Pietas* continue the failures of *pietas* earlier in the poem.

113. The *pietas* of *Oedipus* and *Adrastus* change in an inverse relationship. *Oedipus* calls down destruction on his sons at the opening of the poem but belatedly discovers *pietas* after

*pietas* itself has changed over the course of the poem: the mourners cannot engage in reciprocal behaviors to foster relationships with the living; they can only solemnize those with the dead. *Pietas* now admits no relationships or communication, only personal expressions of devotion.

### *Theseus and the Altar of Clementia*

Statius complements his interpretation of *pietas* with a notion of *clementia* that also encourages individual perseverance in the face of hostile dominant powers. As Argia attends to her husband's body before the walls of Thebes, the other Argive women continue their mission to Athens for the aid that will allow them to bury their own dead. They take refuge at the altar of Clementia, a unique religious site:

parca superstitio: non turea flamma nec altus  
accipitur sanguis: lacrimis altaria sudant,  
maestarumque super libamina secta comarum  
pendent et uestes mutata sorte relictæ.

—(12.487–90)

Frugal is her cult, no flame of incense or deep measure of blood is accepted: the altar is moist with tears and above it hang severed offerings of sad hair and clothing left when luck changed.

The altar accepts only castoffs that cost little or nothing, refusing the traditional incense and blood, the latter all the more so when it is copious (*altus*). Around the altar is a gentle grove (*mite nemus*, 12.491), and there is no image of the spirit that dwells there (*nulla autem effigies*, 12.493). The poor frequent the altar most often, while it remains unknown only to the wealthy (*semper locus horret egenis/coetibus, ignotæ tantum felicibus arae*, 12.495–96). The altar is a refuge for those defeated in war (*huc uicti bellis*, 12.507), and the Argive women feel sense of rest and comfort the moment they arrive (*uix ibi, sedatis requierunt pectora curis*, 12.514).

From the perspective of ordinary Roman religious practice, the altar of Clementia appears rather remarkable.<sup>114</sup> The common reference to “gifts” (*dona*) in traditional rituals shows that these sacrifices to the gods are ritual reciprocal acts imbued with a spirit of generosity, necessarily

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their deaths. Adrastus forms relationships based on *pietas* at his first appearance, but these bonds snap before the duel of Eteocles and Polynices.

114. For further references on the interpretation of the altar see Pollmann 2004 ad 12.481–518.

involving the giving of valuable items on both sides. Clementia's sparing rites, on the other hand, involve nothing of any apparent value. In ordinary sacrifice, offerings such as incense and blood are placed on an altar to be consumed by the divinity. Clementia's rites imply that such offerings represent a harmful waste (notably with the mention of *altus sanguis*). The goddess thus represents a counterprinciple to the massive destructive consumption we witness in the rest of the poem, in which the desire for any good, whether blood or power, runs to pathological excess.

Clementia cannot participate in ordinary reciprocity with mortals,<sup>115</sup> since this requires the exchange of goods and favors that have some value to the other party. Indeed, the goddess herself, lacking any image to show her presence, scarcely exists as an anthropomorphic being with whom one could interact. When Lucan's Cato acts with frugality, he asserts the value of independence and minimal social involvement. But when a goddess remains aloof from binding relationships in this way, she substantially impairs the ability of mortals to access her power.

The novel ritual practices of Clementia produce a new understanding of how mortals who practice *clementia* interact. Prior to Statius, the concept of *clementia* generally involved two parties: an inferior who gave offense and a superior who pardoned the offender. Statius introduces Clementia as a third party who offers the offender refuge from retribution. The poet is not interested in the process whereby a superior evaluates the culpability of an inferior, but rather in the need to aid and comfort those beset, for whatever reason, by superior, often inscrutable forces. Statius characterizes these powers, which include the gods, monarchs, *fata*, and natural forces, as acting out of *inclementia*.<sup>116</sup> In Statius's new formulation, *clementia* gains the potential for universal healing but loses the ability to create a reciprocal bond between forgiver and forgiven. Just as Pietas at the close of the *Thebaid* represents personal fidelity divorced from any interaction, Clementia offers individual consolation without the need for communication with divinities or mortals.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the Argive women feel peace as soon as they arrive at the altar, without having sacrificed to, or even addressed, the goddess.

115. Ahl 1986, 2890, writes that Clementia "stands outside political and religious power structures, and makes no presumption of guilt on the part of its petitioners."

116. Burgess 1972, 344–46. For other interpretations of Statius's *clementia*, see Ripoll 1998, 442.

117. Feeney 1991, 390, observes that Clementia remains in the human heart, as described by Oedipus at his conversion (*sub hoc hominis clementia corde*, 11.606), rather than being a character in the action like Pietas.

Yet as a divinity who scarcely participates in exchange, Clementia has little power beyond her ability to soothe the troubled mind of the individual. So it is that in order to secure the burial of their menfolk, the Argive women must step away from the altar, recall their sorrows, and address Theseus, who is returning in triumph:

paulum et ab inessis maestae Pelopeides aris  
promouere gradum seriemque et dona triumph  
mirantur, uictique animo rediere mariti.  
—(12.540–42)

The sorrowful daughters of Pelops walk a little way from the altar where they sit and admire the procession of triumph gifts. They think again of their vanquished husbands.

The women must leave Clementia behind if they are to approach Theseus for help, and he will indeed champion their cause. But this is a step back into a harsh reality: Theseus in his arrival appears as a refutation of the altar that had given the Argive women such comfort.

The triumphal procession of Theseus (12.519–39) contrasts with the altar in every detail.<sup>118</sup> Whereas the altar belonged to no powerful individual figure, the triumph belongs to Theseus. Whereas the altar was frequented by the poor and accepted no rich offerings, Theseus parades rich spoils, among them baldrics gleaming with fiery gems (*ignea gemmis/cingula*, 12.527–28); one of these costly items is the very blood that the altar refuses, dried onto the Amazons' lost shields (*informes dominarum sanguine peltae*, 12.528). And whereas Clementia admitted no image (*effigies*) of herself and maintained a gentle grove, the spoils of Theseus amount to the very image of the harsh war god (*duri Mauortis imago*, 12.523), who himself can be seen, with his altars that take only human blood (*bellorum solus in aris/sanguis*, 7.53–54), only as the very opposite of Clementia. Theseus drives the defeated Amazons right past the altar, which might otherwise offer them refuge after their defeat in war (*huc uicti bellis*, 12.507). He will proceed to vindicate the Argive women, but on terms that involve thirsting with his spear (*sitit meritos etiamnum haec hasta cruores*, 12.595;

118. Ganiban 2007, 220, notes that the position of Theseus in his chariot as a conqueror makes "the Athenian king . . . hardly a figure embodying the ideal of Clementia's altar." See his pp. 213–14 for a survey of views on Statius's Theseus.

*hasta . . . sitiebat uulnera*, 12.750) after the blood that the altar refuses to consume.<sup>119</sup>

The contrast between Theseus and the altar is also evident in the poem's last act of violence, Theseus's killing of Creon. After we have witnessed the potential for reconciliation offered by the altar of Clementia, it is disturbing to find Theseus himself replaying the end of the *Aeneid* by representing the killing he is about to commit as a sacrifice:<sup>120</sup>

Argolici, quibus haec datur hostia, manes,  
pandite Tartareum chaos ultricesque parate  
Eumenidas, uenit ecce Creon!  
—(12.771–73)

Argive ghosts, to whom this victim is offered, open wide the void of  
Tartarus, make ready avenging Furies, for see, Creon comes!

Like Mars (7.53–54), Theseus sacrifices an enemy on the battlefield, while Clementia accepts no blood whatsoever.<sup>121</sup>

119. Ganiban 2007, 21: "*clementia* offers the only hope to the ruled against the immense power of rulers. *Clementia*, not *pietas*, has become the ideal virtue in the *Thebaid's* world of tyrants." I agree that Theseus represents perhaps the best king possible in the world of the *Thebaid* (Ganiban 2007, 214), but Ganiban underestimates the extent of the contrast between Theseus and the altar. He writes that "scholarly writing often assumes . . . that Theseus represents the ideals expressed in the description of the *ara Clementiae* (i.e. *Clementia* as *miser cordia*). I will argue, however, that the text does not explicitly draw that connection for us" (219–20). More than failing to associate Theseus strongly with *clementia*, Statius creates a marked contrast between the two. Furthermore, I do not believe we can assimilate Statian *clementia* to Senecan *miser cordia* when Statius takes such pains to present his own definition of *clementia* through the description of the altar and when the word *miser cordia* appears nowhere in the poem.

120. Hardie 1993a, 46.

121. Braund 1996, 4, argues to the contrary that Theseus's construal of his killing of Creon as a sacrifice does not undermine the close identification of Theseus and Clementia: "The potential paradox or moral dilemma here . . . is averted by Statius's emphatic indications that Creon is totally isolated (756 *abscedunt comites*, 758–59 *aequa . . . hinc atque hinc odia*), like a scapegoat. He is the legitimate and indeed the necessary sacrifice, as he knows himself (760 *letale furens atque audax morte futura*)."

This interpretation, however, does not bridge the fundamental gap between Theseus and Clementia revealed by the killing. If the altar's defining characteristic were the acceptance of only proper blood sacrifice, and if we were to accept that Theseus made such a sacrifice of a scapegoat by killing Creon, then Theseus could be equated here with Clementia. As it is, though, the altar of Clementia takes no blood, nor does it accept anything that could be considered of any substantial value to anyone. Theseus, on the other hand, represents his own killing as the sacrifice of human blood, which, however



The thorough contrast between Theseus and Clementia at the close of the poem suggests that although individuals can practice personal devotion (*pietas*) and receive consolation (*clementia*), the world remains dominated by a desire for consumption that tends to pass beyond all bounds. Theseus's spear thirsts for blood much as Tydeus desired to drink down the souls and eat the flesh of his enemies. Neither of these characters shows any trace of calculation in the fulfillment of their desires. In both cases, the desire for violence represents a motive force that can be harnessed for good ends but otherwise tends toward wider destruction. When reciprocal practices have vanished, ordinary mortals in distress are forced to make a difficult decision. They must either seek the powerful but uncontrollable aid of a figure such as Theseus or abandon their search for resolution and resign themselves to the solace offered by Clementia. The Argive women ultimately opt for Theseus; they are fortunate that his desire for violence coincides with their call for justice, so that they come away vindicated and unscathed.

### *Parthenopaeus*

Just before the poem's closing epilogue, Statius declares that he is unable to fully recount the mourning that followed the war. Instead, he will name a few of the bereaved to represent the magnitude of the loss and lamentation (12.797–809). Among those whose fates he does briefly describe, Statius saves a special place for the young Arcadian Parthenopaeus, who made his first entry into war as an Argive ally, performed great martial feats, and was killed (9.570–907). Parthenopaeus is prominent as the last character Statius mourns, and indeed the last mortal character mentioned in the poem. Statius calls further attention to the loss of Parthenopaeus with a triple anaphora of his name. The narrator says that he cannot adequately recount

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tainted it may be with crimes, remains priceless at the altar of Clementia. For these reasons, I also disagree with McNelis 2007, 176, who follows Braund and reads Theseus as an exemplar of the *clementia* claimed by the Flavians.

Ripoll 1998, 444–46, notes the contrast between Theseus and Clementia, including the fact that Theseus is never described as *clemens* or said to have *clementia*. He interprets Theseus as reasserting an epic heroic ideal after the close of the tragic main action of the poem represented by the altar. But I do not believe we can ignore the invitation Statius proffers his readers to evaluate Theseus in terms of the altar's morality when he brings them into such close physical proximity and presents specifically contrasting details.

Arcada quo planctu genetrix Erymanthia clamet,  
 Arcada, consumpto seruante sanguine uultus,  
 Arcada, quem geminae pariter fleuere cohortes.  
 —(12.805–7)

With what lamentation the Erymanthian mother bewails the Arcadian, who keeps his beauty though blood was spent, the Arcadian, for whom both armies wept alike.

Despite the mournful atmosphere in these lines, scholars have tended to interpret this closing emphasis on Parthenopaeus as a sign of hope, however mixed.<sup>122</sup>

Parthenopaeus has a further role as the final focal point, however, because he has engaged in, and so sums up, all of the major types of socioeconomic action in the poem. Just as Vergil's Ascanius takes part in reciprocal and commodity behaviors in a way that leaves uncertain which will dominate in the future, so the figure of Parthenopaeus looks both backward to the socioeconomic dynamics of the poem and forward to its implied consequences. The most obvious difference between these two figures is that Ascanius survives his epic. The two youths have correspondingly different roles as representatives of the socioeconomic dynamics of their poems: Ascanius, despite partaking in a variety of economic behaviors, preserves a hope for the power of reciprocal exchange that his father had championed; Parthenopaeus represents the fragmentation of traditional socioeconomic behavior in the *Thebaid*, as well as the minimalist potential for individual hope and endurance in the face of destructive consumption.

Both sides lament the loss of Parthenopaeus as a victim of the war. His blood has been "used up" (*consumpto . . . sanguine*), just as so much else has been destroyed in libidinal acts of wholesale consumption. Yet Parthenopaeus was not only a victim, but also a savage aggressor. The repetition of the word *Arcada*, describing Parthenopaeus, recalls his most sa-

122. Ahl 1986, 2905, views Parthenopaeus as an innocent boy (*puer improbe*, 9.744) and sees in the persistence of his handsome features an indication that beauty can and will survive the war: "for all man's attempts to turn natural beauty into ugliness, he fails." Hardie 1993a, 48, reads the parallel suspension of Parthenopaeus's life before full manhood and suspension of war hostilities as an indication that violence will run its course: "the spending of blood immobilizes violence" in the same way that death suspends the boy's sexual development. Braund 1996, 4–8, sees the last three paragraphs of the poem as a triple closural supplement.

lient scene in the poem, the *aristeia* in which he defends the honor of his Arcadians (*Arcadiae stirpem et fera semina gentis*, 9.792). When the Thebans retreat in deference to his tender youth, he presses his attack with no reservations (*sed premit et saeuas miserantibus ingerit hastas*, 9.708). Diana gives Parthenopaeus unerring arrows and covers him with protective spells (9.728–35), whereupon his desire for slaughter leads him to exploit his advantages too far and inflict more violence than is fitting (*nimum caelestibus utitur armis*, 9.738). Among the (possibly retreating) victims of Parthenopaeus's assault is Eurytion, whom he kills cruelly (*saeuius*, 9.749). He begins by shooting one of his infallible arrows into Eurytion's eye. Eurytion has the courage to tear out the arrow and eye together, fling them at Parthenopaeus, and charge. The boy then shoots out his other eye. Eurytion continues to try to reach his foe until he trips and then lies begging for friend or foe to kill him (9.749–57). Parthenopaeus leaves Eurytion to his misery but continues killing enemies as fast as he can manage (*nec requies dextrae*, 9.771), causing carnage so terrific that it can scarcely be attributed to one warrior (*unum quis crederet arcum/aut unam saeuire manum?*, 9.772–73). Parthenopaeus does not check his desire for slaughter: *nec se mente regit* (9.737). The spirit of Mars spurred Parthenopaeus to fight (*audaci Martis percussus amore*, 4.260), and Mars himself rouses the gigantic Dryas to slay him (9.831–44).<sup>123</sup>

Parthenopaeus, like Tydeus and Theseus, is carried along by a hunger for violence. But his slow and sadistic killing of Eurytion also reveals a calculation reminiscent of Jupiter in feeding that hunger. The Theban Amphion asks Parthenopaeus how long he thinks he can “profit by” his last moments alive: *quonam usque moram lucrabere fati?* (9.779). Amphion is warning Parthenopaeus not to continue fighting just to sate his desire for pleasure. His use of the word *lucrabere* suggests at the same time that Parthenopaeus is exercising a deliberate calculation in producing violence.<sup>124</sup>

123. In addition, Parthenopaeus is not tempted solely by the desire for war, but also by a desire for spoils which, like that of Vergil's Camilla, helps get him killed: 9.814–17. See Dewar 1991 ad 9.818f.

124. Dewar 1991 ad 9.779 argues that “by *lucrabere* [Amphion] must mean ‘staying alive,’” because Amphion “knows nothing of the boy's victories.” Statius did inform us of Amphion's ignorance in the previous line: *Amphion ignarus adhuc, quae funera campis/ille daret* (9.778–79). But with all the Thebans marveling and raging at the successes of Parthenopaeus (*iam mirantes indignantesque coibant/Labdacidae*, 9.776–77), this statement cannot mean that Amphion, who is close enough to the boy to address him, could fail to perceive that Parthenopaeus was fighting. Rather, Amphion is simply unaware of the devastating nature and extent of the boy's killing (*quae funera*), a fact that explains why he is still willing to treat Partheno-

Despite his rampage, Parthenopaeus is as much victim as aggressor. He quickly falls from heady triumph to wretched defeat in a drastic reversal highlighted by the implicit contrast with Vergil's youthful and overmatched Pallas. During his *aristeia*, Parthenopaeus burns for violence more than Pallas does, but when Parthenopaeus's good fortune runs out and he confronts a powerful enemy, he cannot muster the courage and skill Pallas shows against Turnus. Instead, he loses confidence and fumbles hopelessly with his weapons, as feeble a victim now as he was a formidable killer.<sup>125</sup>

Just as Parthenopaeus represents both the perpetrators and the victims of consumption and mercantile calculation, so too his actions and fate recapitulate the limitations of reciprocity in the *Thebaid*. As he lies dying in Book 9, Parthenopaeus offers a lock of his hair to be sent to his mother Atalanta for burial, anticipates the obsequies that will be given to him, and says that his mother should either burn his shield or offer it to "thankless" Diana (9.900–907; *ingratae . . . Dianae*, 9.907). Here, gifts have no power to unite, or even to corrupt (as they do Eriphyle), but only contribute to hollow, belated gestures. Even though Parthenopaeus is a "pious" companion to Diana, to whom she gives gifts before his death (*dona pio comiti*, 9.659), Parthenopaeus finds no *gratia* with Diana, just as there is none in the world as a whole. As in his case, so throughout the poem: gifts are most often given to dead recipients, so that, rather than forging and strengthening relationships, they become gestures of individual consolation.

The only moment of full reciprocal *pietas* after Book 1 comes in the wake of Creon's death, just before the narrator mourns Parthenopaeus, when the Theban and Athenian forces unite:

accedunt utrimque pio vexilla tumultu  
 permiscentque manus; medio iam foedera bello,  
 iamque hospes Theseus.  
 —(12.782–84)

From both sides the standards meet in friendly confusion; they grasp hands. In the midst of battle comes a treaty; now Theseus is a guest.

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paeus as a boy and allow him to return home. Despite this ignorance, Amphion does recognize the swelling excitement that drives the boy to fight and so endanger himself (*menti tumor atque audacia gliscit*, 9.781). As we learned shortly before, this excitement is Parthenopaeus's exultation at the slaughter of battle (*iam caede superbum*, 9.683).

125. Schetter 1960, 46, writes of Parthenopaeus's joy in battle and draws the comparison with Vergil's Pallas. Parthenopaeus's fatal encounter is at 9.857–74.

On the one hand, the full flower of reciprocal gestures represents closure through ring composition: we return to a scene of reciprocity as *hospitium* that recalls Adratus's Argos in Book 1. Yet this reconciliation only releases the possibility of mourning with which the poem ends (*luctus*, 12.796; *gemitus*, 12.799), and which comes to focus on Parthenopaeus. Both sides unite in mourning him (*geminatē pariter fleuere cohortes*, 12.807), and his strangely enduring beauty becomes emblematic. Once again, the bereaved concentrate their thoughts on someone with whom they cannot communicate, and his beauty remains a pure symbol of their hopes. Yet in such mourning all are united not by any enduring bonds, but only by the common experience of misery. These closing gestures of consolidation anticipate a fragmented future,<sup>126</sup> one lacking the reciprocity that unites families and nations, beset by the mercantile pursuit of self-interest, and subject to an inexhaustible and calamitous desire for consumption.

126. Pagan 2000, 447.



## CHAPTER SIX

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### Eteocles, Polynices, and Creon

For characters such as Jupiter and Tydeus, inflicting and witnessing violence are ways of exercising their power to produce pleasure. Eteocles and Polynices, the brothers whose conflict over the kingship of Thebes lies at the heart of the *Thebaid*, are primarily concerned with securing a power they do not yet possess. But Eteocles and Polynices engage in destructive consumption no less than Jupiter or Tydeus. As they fight for control of Thebes, Statius shows each of the brothers squandering resources in a headlong drive for domination. Like Jupiter, Eteocles calculates the human blood and lives necessary to achieve his goals and is not averse to delighting in the destruction he causes. Polynices lacks any taste for the pleasures of violence, but he spends the lives of Argives and Thebans with careless prodigality. Eteocles and Polynices thus differ fundamentally in their approaches to exchange and consumption in ways that make Eteocles more morally culpable for the devastation of the war.

My interpretation contradicts the majority of scholars, who contend that the brothers are fundamentally similar, so I begin with a discussion of views on this issue to set my conclusions in context. Most recent commentators on the *Thebaid* acknowledge only insignificant differences between the two brothers because their origins, goals, and fates are indeed almost indistinguishable,<sup>1</sup> though others have pointed out important dif-

1. Burck 1979, 328, writes simply that Polynices does not differ much from Eteocles, even if we allow that he has some superior traits. Cf. Taisne 1994, 72–73. Frings 1992 finds little significant distinction between the brothers, a fact she attributes to Statius's overriding interest in mannerist excess. Dominik 1994, 80, states that "Polynices is not superior morally in any sense to his brother or more deserving of sympathy, . . . since both men are equally capable of abusing monarchical power." Pollmann 2001, 16, argues that "anti-piety" has the central role

ferences between them, such as the fiercer and more tyrannical character of Eteocles.<sup>2</sup> One of the main lines of approach of those who see the brothers as nearly identical has been to engage the social theories of René Girard. To explain these readings, we must review some of the aspects of Girard's model discussed in chapter 1.

Girardean readings of the *Thebaid* emphasize the resemblance of the two brothers, because at two points in his theory Girard posits a necessary assimilation of those who participate in violence. Girard argues first that individuals come into conflict not through competition for resources, but through emulation, or what he calls "mimetic desire." As one individual strives to imitate another who is seeking a goal, each comes to resemble the other to the point that they must turn violently against each another to reassert their individuality.<sup>3</sup> The second moment of identity comes once the violence that arises from mimetic desire spreads throughout a community and threatens its existence. A "sacrificial crisis" results in which the community chooses one of its members at random to displace the accumulated violence by being sacrificed. The victim must be functionally identical to the other members of the community in order to serve as an object of the community's internecine urge for violence. The victim's destruction can then bring peace to the community without the risk of retribution.<sup>4</sup>

As a pair who come into conflict, Eteocles and Polynices seem to reflect the first moment of identity in Girard's theory, when mimetic desire gives rise to violence, more than the second, when violence abates through sacrificial crisis. Girard does not come to such specific conclusions in his discussion of Eteocles and Polynices in tragedy, but he does argue that mimetic desire makes the two brothers fundamentally identical, and that any partiality the tragedians may show toward one of the broth-

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in the *Thebaid* that *pietas* has in the *Aeneid*, with the result that Eteocles and Polynices both "clearly disregard the moral rules of humanity and follow rather the influence of the Furies than the will of the gods." Thus the brothers, along with the other "main heroes of the *Thebaid* . . . embody the perversion of Roman piety." In advancing interpretations of the world of the *Thebaid* as utterly corrupt, both Dominik 1994 and Pollmann 2001 argue that the brothers are nearly identical in their vices.

2. Pollmann 2004, 21. Helzlsouer 1996, 176–88, concludes from his comparison of the brothers that they are fundamentally similar in their desire for power, though he allows that the Thebans sympathize more with Polynices, and he shows that Polynices speaks in a more casual and less militaristic manner than Eteocles. On distinctions between the brothers, see further Bonds 1985, 235, and Delarue 2000, 242–52.

3. Girard 1977, 144–49.

4. Girard 1977, 49, and Girard 1987, 3–47.

ers is superficial.<sup>5</sup> Several classical scholars, following Girard, have arrived at similar interpretations of the warring brothers in tragedy and the *Thebaid*.<sup>6</sup>

At a certain level of generality, the near-identity of the two brothers is undeniable. But Hardie's more developed argument for the similarity of Eteocles and Polynices in the *Thebaid*, also based on the notion of mimetic rivalry, points to the interpretive limitations of Girard's theories for detailed analysis.<sup>7</sup> Hardie takes as his central example the Theban bacchant's prophecy of the coming conflict, in which the brothers are compared to fighting bulls:

en urges (alium tibi, Bacche, furorem  
iurau): similes uideo concurrere tauros;  
idem ambobus honos unusque ab origine sanguis;  
ardua collatis obnixa cornua miscent  
frontibus alternaque truces moriuntur in ira.  
tu peior, tu cede, nocens qui solus auita  
gramina communemque petis defendere montem.  
—(4.396–402)

Lo, you drive me. Not this the madness I swore to you, Bacchus. I see a pair of bulls clash; both handsome, with one blood of origin. They lock lofty horns butting head to head and fiercely die in mutual wrath. You are the worse; give way, you sinner, you that seek to defend alone hereditary pasture and common hill.

5. Girard 1977, 45–47, 61–62, 65–66, 150, 279.

6. In her analysis of Aeschylus's *Seven against Thebes*, Zeitlin 1982, 25–29, writes that Eteocles and Polynices fight one another to establish a difference between themselves, but without success, because each remains victor and vanquished, identical while embodying a principle of difference. Others disagree, including Hutchinson, who in the introduction to his edition of Aesch. *Sept.* judges that Eteocles at least recognizes the interest of the community, unlike his brother. In his reading of the *Thebaid*, Henderson 1998, 224 n. 34, refers to Zeitlin's analysis approvingly, as well as the contention of Barthes 1977, 61, 62f., that the brothers are united rather than divided by hatred and are ultimately identical. Henderson also cites the phrases *alterna furentes* (7.640) and *alterna gementes* (12.387) as suggestive of conflict between likes, though we should note that these phrases do not actually describe the actions of Eteocles and Polynices. D'Espèrey 1999, 36–39, states that Eteocles is shown to be morally inferior, but she nevertheless finds in the brothers a Girardean similarity to support her argument that the poem's basic conflict is over identity rather than resources.

7. Hardie 1993a, 21 n. 5, states that he does not take Girard's model as a reliable historical account of cultural origins but sees in it "a mythology . . . shared by Romans of the early principate" useful for understanding Roman epic poetry.



As Hardie observes, Statius emphasizes the similarity of the brothers with the words *alium*, *similes*, *idem ambobus*, *unus . . . sanguis*, *miscent*, *alternaque . . . ira*, *solus*, and *communem*. Citing phrases from Girard, Hardie writes of this passage that "the 'alternation of anger' marks no 'stable difference,' only a 'revolving opposition.'"<sup>8</sup>

There are two problems with this Girardean reading, one of fact and one of theory. First, we cannot overlook the fact that amid the many expressions of similarity between the two brothers, the bacchant draws a rather emphatic distinction. In a clear reference to Eteocles,<sup>9</sup> she calls one bull worse and guilty (*peior . . . nocens*) for trying to hold the land that belongs to both.<sup>10</sup> The prominent assertion of the brothers' difference among their similarities leads us to the second problem with this reading, namely that the conflict described in the metaphor is at odds with the process of mimetic rivalry described by Girard. The metaphor suggests that Eteocles and Polynices could equally well come into conflict owing to underlying differences rather than increasing similarity.

Certainly, the Girardean idea of mimetic desire provides us with one answer to the question of why Eteocles and Polynices focus so intently upon one another in the final moments of their conflict. When Polynices stands momentarily victorious over Eteocles, he wants nothing more than for the royal insignia to be brought to him in order to taunt his dying brother with the fact that he is now king (11.559–60). We might read this act, along with the death blow itself, as Polynices' attempt to finally distinguish himself fully from the brother who has been his near-double. But Girard's theories are less helpful when we attempt to fully account for the differences, as well as similarities, that bring the two brothers to this point.

In fact, Eteocles and Polynices shift from similarity to difference and back again over the course of the poem. It is Eteocles who rejects the agreement for alternating rule (1.123–30), but Statius declares that "naked desire

8. Hardie 1993a, 24. Ahl 1986, 2883, notes another similarity when he observes that the bull simile resonates with images of both brothers elsewhere in the poem: Polynices is described as a bull at 2.323–32, and as he prepares for the duel at 11.251–56 Eteocles is compared to a bull ready to meet a returned rival. Hardie 1993a, 23, observes that Statius uses the image of bulls repeatedly in referring to the conflict between Eteocles and Polynices.

9. If we take the word *defendere* as meaning "to claim," the bull who *peti[t] defendere montem* could seem to refer to either Eteocles or Polynices, both of whom claim title to Thebes. Yet the word *peior* indicates that one of the two is worse and so invites us to distinguish one from the other. We thus logically read the rest of the sentence beginning *tu, peior* as indicating which one of the bulls is worse and how. The worse bull is the one that seeks to "defend" the territory belonging to both, a picture strongly suggestive of Eteocles in his current situation, guarding Thebes against Polynices.

10. See Helzlsouer 1996, 176, 183.

for power armed the brothers" (*nuda potestas/armauit fratres*, 1.150–51), suggesting shared culpability. As Book 1 proceeds, the narrator comments that the multitude supports Polynices only because it commonly favors those not yet in power (1.171); an anonymous critic asserts that Polynices would have acted much the same had he taken the throne (1.189–91); and, only shortly after being exiled, Polynices shows in his quarrel with Tydeus the same proclivity to use force that his brother will later display (1.401–81).<sup>11</sup>

As we proceed beyond the first book, indications of Polynices' superiority emerge.<sup>12</sup> One expression of the narrator's sympathies lies in the fact that "Statius thoroughly damns [Eteocles] in advance [of introducing him in book 2]. Every mention of the ruling brother elicits an unpleasant epithet such as *saevus*, *crudelis*, *durus*, *nefandus*, *impius*."<sup>13</sup> Just as in Book 4 the Theban bacchant refers to Eteocles as "worse," prior to his final duel with Polynices, the narrator describes the crime that Polynices is about to commit as more just (*cui fortior ira nefasque/iustus*, 11.541–42).<sup>14</sup> When Polynices nearly yields to the exhortations of Pietas and Fides not to fight, he reveals an essential superiority to Eteocles, who shows no such susceptibility.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, it is Polynices who treacherously kills his brother; in the *Thebaid*, Statius gives this role to Eteocles.<sup>16</sup>

Statius does not enforce this distinction rigidly.<sup>17</sup> Above all, the broth-

11. These passages are treated in Ahl 1986, 2827–29, 2852. He also addresses the *fraternas acies* and *alterna regna* of the poem's opening line. In his examination of the correspondences between Polynices' fight with Tydeus in Book 1 and his duel with Eteocles in Book 11, Bonds 1985, 227, observes that Polynices acts with an intensity of emotion in these two episodes that he lacks elsewhere in the poem.

12. Ahl 1986, 2885: "The poet notes popular tendencies to sympathize with the outcast, and this is where his own preference seems to lie too."

13. Ahl 1986, 2873.

14. Discussed in Ahl 1986, 2885. Creon blames Eteocles for instigating the war (11.271), but he is scarcely an objective judge.

15. Feeney 1991, 387. Ahl 1986, 2881–84, likewise observes that although Polynices hesitates when his mother, Jocasta, implores him not to fight (7.470–559) and momentarily forgets his anger when Antigone later makes a similar plea (11.384–87), we do not see the effects of Jocasta's entreaties to Eteocles (11.315–53), who simply gallops off to face his brother. Note also that Polynices gains favor owing to his pitiable fate as an exile (*tacite praeponderat exsul*, 8.615), apropos of which Ahl 1986, 2883, remarks that his family, the reader, and the poet all favor Polynices.

16. Eur. *Phoen.* 1419–24; *fraudem*, *Theb.* 11.554. See Ganiban 2007, 189–90.

17. Ahl 1986, 2885. Nor, however, are the brothers as alike as Ahl contends. He cites (p. 2873) two examples from the Book 2 interview between Eteocles and Tydeus to show the potential virtues of Eteocles and failings of Polynices. When Eteocles asserts that a change of rulers harms subjects (2.443–46), he echoes the sentiment expressed earlier by an anonymous

ers share an abiding desire for power: Eteocles refuses to relinquish the Theban throne, while Polynices persists in his claim to the kingship despite Adrastus's generous offer of a wealthy, comfortable life at Argos. The identities of the brothers certainly merge at the poem's close, where Polynices promises to struggle on with his brother in Tartarus (11.557–72) and is transformed with his brother into the split flame of their shared funeral pyre (12.429–46). But throughout the central books of the poem, Statius indicates fundamental ethical differences between the brothers, not least through their dispositions toward exchange and consumption.

### Eteocles' Calculated Appetites

#### *Desire for Violence*

Eteocles, as king of Thebes, shares with Jupiter, king of the heavens, a predilection for the pleasures of inflicting violence, as is evident from the moment in Book 2 when we first observe him up close. The narrator sets the scene for the introduction of Eteocles with mention of the Bacchic revels taking place in Thebes, a passage considered in the previous chapter for its theme of banqueting and violence, the last part of which bears directly upon the character of the city's current ruler. Statius compares the Theban bacchantes celebrating in the woods to savage Thracian hordes:

ipse etiam gaudens nemorosa per auia sanas  
 impulerat matres Baccho meliore Cithaeron:  
 qualia per Rhodopen rabido conuiuia coetu  
 Bistones aut mediae ponunt conuallibus Ossae;  
 illis semianimum pecus excussaeque leonum  
 ore dapes et lacte nouo domuisse cruorem  
 luxus; at Ogygii si quando adflauit Iacchi  
 saeuus odor, tunc saxa manu, tunc pocula pulchrum  
 spargere et inmerito sociorum sanguine fuso  
 instaurare diem festasque reponere mensas.  
 —(2.79–88)

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Theban critic (1.173–96). Ahl remarks that “Eteocles’ determination not to give up power can be represented as, ultimately, in the state’s best interests.” In addition, Tydeus falsely represents Polynices to Eteocles and the Theban court as a penniless exile when he is in fact living in substantial comfort in Argos (2.402–3; cf. Helzle 1996, 176–88). But Eteocles’ concern for political stability at Thebes is clearly a pretense to allow him to retain power, and we cannot take Tydeus’s misrepresentations as reflecting the basic character of Polynices.

Cithaeron himself had merrily driven sane mothers through the wooded wilds under a better Bacchus. Such feasts do Bistones in wild assembly lay out on Rhodope or amid Ossa's vales; for them a sheep half living, food shaken from lions' jaws, and blood diluted with new milk is a luxury; but if ever the fierce odor of Ogygian Iacchus breathes upon them, then they love to scatter stones and winecups, and after spilling guiltless blood of comrades to begin the day afresh and reset the festal boards.

The wild Thracians eat herd animals alive (*semianimum pecus*), and, once drunk on Theban wine (*Ogygii . . . Iacchi*), attack and wound their companions for no reason (*inmerito sociorum sanguine fuso*). Theban wine thus heightens Thracian savagery, but how would uncivilized Thracians have procured Theban wine in the first place? This incongruous detail seems meant to link the behavior of the Thracians with Thebes.

Enter, in the lines immediately following, the current Theban king, Eteocles, visited by the ghost of his grandfather Laius:

nox ea cum tacita uolucer Cyllenius aura  
regis Echionii stratis adlapsus, ubi ingens  
fuderat Assyriis exstructa tapetibus alto  
membra toro. pro gnara nihil mortalia fati  
corda sui! capit ille dapes, habet ille soporem.  
—(2.89–93)

Such was the night when from the silent air the swift Cyllenian glided to the Echionian monarch's bed, where he had poured out his huge frame on a high mattress, his limbs piled on Assyrian draperies. Ah mortal hearts all unknowing of their destinies! He banquets, he sleeps—even he!

Eteocles has also clearly been drinking Theban wine, in his case at a feast along with the other Theban men left behind by the bacchants for their superior celebration of Dionysus (*Baccho meliore*, 2.80). Eteocles is in fact so awash in wine that he "had poured his limbs out" (*fuderat membra*) onto his couch in drunken collapse. Yet so far the wine has not affected Eteocles as it does the Thracians. He shows a taste for consumption only of the food, drink, and luxuries (*Assyriis . . . tapetibus*) in which the tyrant typically indulges.

As we proceed, however, we see that this indulgence is only a superfi-

cial indication of a deeper desire, which the spirit of his grandfather rouses as he stirs Eteocles from his sleep. Appearing in a dream, the spirit initially takes the shape of the seer Tiresias and commands Eteocles to awaken and confront the challenge to his rule Polynices is preparing (2.94–119). Just before it departs, the spirit of Laius reveals its true identity, and then in a bizarrely horrific act pours blood from its neck over the sleeping Eteocles:

dirique nepotis  
incubuit stratis; iugulum mox caede patentem  
nudat et undanti perfundit uulnere somnum.  
—(2.122–24)

Then bending over his fell grandson's couch, he bares the gaping wound of his throat and drenches the sleeper with a stream of gore.

Theban wine had been enough to drive the uncivilized Thracians to a pure desire for violence. Laius douses Eteocles with a more concentrated Theban draft: distilled in his blood is the desire for violence of the line of Theban rulers, the same desire that had led Eteocles' father, Oedipus, to commit his rash killing at the crossroads.

This desire becomes evident after Eteocles awakens. He tries to prevent the blood from seeping into him by shaking it off (*uanumque cruorem/excutiens*, 2.126–27), but to no effect. Succumbing to its power, Eteocles is compared to a tigress roused by the noise of hunters, her one desire simply to fight:

qualis ubi audito uenantum murmure tigris  
horruit in maculas somnosque excussit inertes,  
bella cupit laxatque genas et temperat ungues,  
mox ruit in turmas natisque alimenta cruentis  
spirantem fert ore uirum: sic excitus ira  
ductor in absentem consumit proelia fratrem.  
—(2.128–33)

As when a tigress hears the noise of the hunters, she bristles into her stripes and shakes off the sloth of sleep; she longs for battle, loosens her jaws, flexes her claws, and then rushes upon the troop and carries in her mouth a breathing man, food for her bloody young; so in fury does the chieftain fight it out against his absent brother.

The tigress metaphorically desires "wars" (*bella cupit*), but these words apply literally to the simile's referent, Eteocles, who now longs for actual wars even before circumstances make them inevitable. This device, whereby metaphorical meaning turns literal, ties the tigress's desire for violence more closely to that of Eteocles, suggesting that his motivation for going to war closely approximates the animal's pure desire to fight. The simile also presents a telling contrast between the tigress and Eteocles. In addition to her desire, the tigress also has a practical purpose: she wants humans as food for her cubs. Unlike the tigress and in contrast to his brother, Eteocles has no social bonds to speak of apart from his regal relation to his subjects, being apparently without wife or friends and distant at best from the members of his family. His violence will thus emphatically serve not the needs of others, but only his own desire.

The passage introducing Eteocles ends fittingly with the phrase *in absentem consumit proelia fratrem* at 2.133. We saw in the previous chapter how Statius expresses his concern for consumption with the word *consumere*, and as it turns out Eteocles is one of the greatest destructive consumers in the poem. This phrase sums up the forms of violent consumption associated with Eteocles as we are first introduced to him. These range from the strife caused by consumption of wine among the Thracians, to Eteocles' own languid consumption of wine and luxuries, to his bestial desire for violence after he absorbs the blood of his grandfather's ghost. The phrase *in absentem consumit proelia fratrem* thus indicates not simply that Eteocles rages, but that he does indeed want to consume something—the pleasures of violence that battles produce.

Furthermore, the word order in this phrase indicates that for Eteocles, as for the tigress, the desire for violence takes precedence over any concern for its consequences. The tigress first desires to fight, then thinks of her cubs. As the placement of *consumit proelia* between the words *in absentem . . . fratrem* suggests, Polynices will be the boundary and limit of Eteocles' violent actions, but Eteocles' desire does not originate from their conflict. Its origin lies rather in the disposition he inherits from Jupiter and role as king of Thebes.<sup>18</sup> Eteocles' appetites show that of the latest generation he expresses this *mens* most fully.

18. As discussed in the previous chapter, Jupiter condemns both Thebans and Argives for having the same criminal disposition (*mens cunctis imposita manet*, 1.227), but the examples he gives are all Theban. See Caviglia 1973 ad loc.

*Calculation*

Like Jupiter, Eteocles attempts to fulfill his desire for the pleasures of violence with a kind of *commercium* that spends lives for its own advantage. At first, in Book 1, when the brothers are relatively undifferentiated, both seem to be engaged in this sort of spending. The anonymous critic takes his fellow Thebans to task for favoring the exiled Polynices, declaring that they suffer primarily due to the change of rulers and their submissiveness. They should not marvel that Polynices was once kinder to them, the critic says, for he never held power alone:

tamen ille precanti  
mitis et affatu bonus et patientior aequi.  
quid mirum? non solus erat. nos uilis in omnes  
prompta manus casus, domino cuicumque parati.  
—(1.189–92)

Ah, but the other was gentle to the suppliant, kind of speech and more tolerant of justice. No wonder; he was not alone. As for us, we are a cheap gang, ready to hand for any venture, for any master to use.

For any Theban ruler, it seems, the populace is simply a “cheap gang” (*ui-lis . . . manus*) to be expended for whatever purpose.

As the poem proceeds, however, Eteocles lives up to the anonymous critic’s charge more fully than his brother. In Book 2, Tydeus visits Eteocles on an embassy from Polynices. In his furious parting words, he accuses Eteocles of an eagerness to spend the lives of his Theban subjects to satisfy his desires for wealth and violent spectacle:

“reddes,”  
ingeminat, “reddes; non si te ferreus agger  
ambiat aut triplices alio tibi carmine muros  
Amphion auditus agat, nil tela nec ignes  
obstiterint, quin ausa luas nostrisque sub armis  
captiuo moribundus humum diademate pulses.  
tu merito; ast horum miseret, quos sanguine uiles  
coniugibus natisque infanda ad proelia raptos  
proicis excidio, bone rex. o quanta Cithaeron  
funera sanguineusque uadis, Ismene, rotabis!  
haec pietas, haec magna fides! nec crimina gentis

mira equidem duco: sic primus sanguinis auctor  
incestique patrum thalami; sed fallit origo:  
Oedipodis tu solus eras, haec praemia morum  
ac sceleris, uiolente, feres! nos poscimus annum!  
sed moror."  
—(2.452–67)

"You shall repay," and again, "Repay you shall. Though an iron rampart surround you or Amphion with another song be heard and make you triple walls, neither steel nor fire shall protect you from paying for your deeds as you die beneath our arms, striking the ground with captive diadem. And you'll have earned it. But I pity these whose blood is cheap, whom you fling forth to their destruction, snatched from their wives and children into accursed battle, good king. What carnage, Cithaeron, and you, Ismenos, shall you roll in your bloody waters! This is brotherly love, this mighty faith! Nor do I wonder at the crimes of your race. Thus was the first author of your blood, thus the impure wedlock of your fathers. But the source deceives; you alone came of Oedipus. This, man of violence, is the reward you shall reap of your ways and your crime. We demand our year—but I tarry."

Tydeus tells Eteocles that he will "pay" (*luas*) for his rash acts with his own death as he deserves. One should, however, have pity for those whom Eteocles now snatches away from their families and flings to their destruction into horrific battles. Eteocles considers these people, according to Tydeus, *sanguine uiles*, "cheap (with respect to their) blood." By a common metonymy, blood means "birth" or "social status," and in this sense, the lives of these Thebans are "cheap" due to their low social status. But the phrase *sanguine uiles* also means that Eteocles considers the actual blood of his subjects worth so little that he does not hesitate to expend it.<sup>19</sup> In closing, Tydeus calls Eteocles a "savage" or "violent" man (*uiolentus*), suggesting that Eteocles gladly spends lives not only to further his own interests, but also because he enjoys violence. Echoing Jupiter's attribution to the Thebans of a *mens* like his own, Tydeus declares that Eteocles gets this violent aspect of his character (*morum*) from his father, Oedipus, of whom he, not Polynices, is the only true son. Tydeus tells Eteocles that he

19. As if to remind us of these two possibilities for the word *sanguis*, Statius immediately proceeds to use two forms of the lexeme in these separate senses: *sanguineus* ("bloody") in 461 and *sanguinis* ("race") in 463.



will have fitting "rewards" (*praemia*) for acting on this disposition. Tydeus's statement will come true in the ironic way he intends. Eteocles will ultimately have only death as his reward, but in the meantime he will in fact take profit and pleasure from the violence he creates.

We might discount Tydeus's assessment of Eteocles in the royal palace as hostile contumely or an incitement of the Thebans against their king. For indeed, Tydeus is willing to misrepresent Polynices as a destitute wanderer in order to make Eteocles' refusal to relinquish power look harsher (2.399–405).<sup>20</sup> Statius gives two indications, however, that Tydeus's evaluation of the character of Eteocles is essentially accurate. First, Tydeus's charge that Eteocles carelessly spends lives echoes that of the Theban critic, who condemned both brothers equally for such callousness.

More significantly, a marked intertext likens Tydeus to the character Drances in the *Aeneid*, who despite his bias speaks truly about his adversary Turnus. When Tydeus accuses Eteocles of indifference to the lives of the common folk, his argument and language closely follow those of Vergil's Drances during the Latin war council of *Aeneid* 11.<sup>21</sup> Drances speaks of the "violence" of Turnus (*ullius uiolentia*, 11.354); Tydeus calls Eteocles *uiolente*. Drances asks why Turnus thrusts the Latin people into battle (*quid miseros totiens in aperta pericula ciuis/proicis*, 11.360–61) and enjoins him to pity his own people (*miserere tuorum*, 11.365); Tydeus says that the fighting masses should be pitied (*horum miseret*, 2.458) and speaks of Eteocles forcing the Thebans into terrible battles, using the same verb Drances had, *proicis*, in the same metrical position (*quos sanguine uiles . . . raptos/proicis excidio*, 2.458–60). Finally, Drances refers to himself and the other Latins caught up in Turnus's war as *animae uiles* (11.372), just as Tydeus refers to the Thebans as *sanguine uiles* (2.458) for Eteocles.<sup>22</sup> This complex of allusion suggests that we can accept Tydeus's character analysis even if he is hardly objective, just as "we are well aware that there is a good deal in what Drances says" despite his hatred for Turnus.<sup>23</sup> Drances accuses Turnus of spending the lives of others that he holds cheap (*animae uiles*) to advance his own cause and satisfy a desire for violence (*uiolentia*, 11.354). The same charges made by Tydeus against Eteocles seem no less accurate.

20. Ahl 1986, 2873.

21. Caiani 1989.

22. Cf. the complaint of Caesar's soldiers at Luc. 5.263 that he squanders their lives, which he holds "cheap" (*animasque effundere uiles*), and again at 5.683 that he holds their lives "cheap" (*nos uiles animas*).

23. Quinn 1968, 242.

This intertext also further defines the mercantile nature of Eteocles through a contrast with Tydeus. So far, we have considered how Eteocles resembles Turnus (both are accused from a superior position) and how Tydeus resembles Drances (both accuse from an inferior position). But in respect to social role and character, Eteocles has important similarities with Drances, and Tydeus with Turnus. Eteocles does not quite have the “cold hand for war” (*frigida bello/dextera*, *Aen.* 11.338–39) of Drances, but he mainly stays behind the city walls, taking no major role in the war fighting, and goes to meet his brother for a duel only when compelled to do so by Creon (*Theb.* 11.269–96). Like Drances,<sup>24</sup> Eteocles is an able speaker. He can suppress his burning anger beneath a calm exterior (*illi tacito sub pectore dudum/igne corda fremunt*, 2.410–11), and he has the presence of mind in the face of Tydeus’s hostility first to declare that Tydeus’s speech is immoderately belligerent (2.415–25) and then to dictate a response for him to carry back to Polynices. Before Tydeus interrupts him, Eteocles expertly lays out several different arguments for why he should remain in power (2.430–51).

For his part, Tydeus, like Turnus, is blunt and short-tempered, a crude speaker but an intrepid warrior,<sup>25</sup> who soon after his confrontation with Eteocles singlehandedly defeats fifty men. Like Turnus, Tydeus is possessed by a pure desire to experience the pleasures of violence through consumption: Turnus collects the heads of his enemies on his chariot rail; Tydeus eats them.<sup>26</sup> But Statius does not apply to Tydeus the language of calculation in violence that Tydeus himself applies to Eteocles, indicating that however great his own desire for violence may be, Tydeus does not come to the point of consciously trading in the lives of others. Tydeus’s words to Eteocles are thus delivered with a warrior’s contempt for a leader who casually uses the lives of his subjects without ever risking his own—the same sort of contempt Turnus shows for Drances, who deliberates on war but does not fight it. By contrast with Tydeus, then, Eteocles is left with the worst features of both Turnus and Drances. He has Turnus’s thirst for violence without the Homeric nobility and courage that partially redeem him. And he has the devious mind and sharp tongue of Drances.

24. *lingua melior*, *Aen.* 11.338.

25. Tydeus is *rudis fandi pronusque calori*, 2.391. He sputters as he interrupts Eteocles (*reddes . . . reddes*, 2.452–53) and ultimately breaks off abruptly (2.467). Turnus becomes “angry to the point of incoherence” (Gransden 1991, 34), particularly when he speaks to Drances, although he recovers his composure when he speaks to Latinus.

26. Turnus: *Aen.* 12.511–12. Feeney 1991, 360; Hardie 1993a, 65–66; and D’Espèrey 1999, 176–78, remark on the bestial ferocity of Tydeus.

Yet whereas Drances used his skills to try to end a war (albeit for his own advantage), Eteocles uses his to provoke one, overwhelming Tydeus's crude attempts at negotiation with a battery of arguments.

The confrontation between Eteocles and Tydeus also highlights Eteocles' marked lack of *fides*. When Tydeus arrives at the Theban court, Eteocles complains that he has come to seek his *fides*, that is, some compact with him, so late (*queriturque fidem tam sero reposci*, 2.388). Tydeus argues that Eteocles plainly has no *fides*, or he would have sent messengers to Polynices earlier announcing his intention to give up control of Thebes (*si tibi plana fides et dicti cura maneret*, 2.393). For Eteocles, Tydeus's truculent manner is "proof" (*fides*, 2.417) of the hatred and scheming of Polynices, and he accuses both of negotiating with threats rather than in good faith (*minis, nec . . . fide*, 2.425). Eteocles claims that the *gratia* (2.450) of the elders of Thebes toward him would not allow him to lay down rule, and Tydeus ends the interview by scoffing at Eteocles' claims to *pietas* and *fides* (*haec pietas, haec magna fides!*, 2.462), a charge he later repeats (*fidem*, 7.612). Antigone, a disinterested judge of her brothers, later gives the lie to Eteocles' pretensions to *fides* and *gratia* when she declares that Eteocles clearly abandoned *fides* first (*nempe ille fidem et stata foedera rupit*, 11.380). Polynices thus rightly charges Eteocles with lack of *fides* before their duel (*scis, saeue, fidem et descendis in aequum?*, 11.393). Eteocles never shows any true *fides* throughout the poem, in contrast to Polynices, who is said to have an remarkable *fides* with Tydeus (*iunctis/esse fidem, quanta partitum extrema proteruo/Thesea Pirithoo*, 1.474–76), and whose troops have great loyalty (*fides*, 4.78) to him. Eteocles' lack of *fides* is fully consistent with the narrator's description of him as an "impious king" (*rex impius*, 11.499).

After Tydeus departs, Eteocles sends fifty men to ambush him. The narrator's description of the scene confirms the substance of Tydeus's accusations:

nec piger ingenio scelerum fraudisque nefandae  
 rector eget. iuuenum fidos, lectissima bello  
 corpora, nunc pretio, nunc ille hortantibus ardens  
 sollicitat dictis, nocturnaque proelia saeuus  
 instruit, et (sanctum populis per saecula nomen)  
 legatum insidiis tacitoque inuadere ferro  
 (quid regnis non uile?) cupit. quas quaereret artes  
 si fratrem, Fortuna, dares? o caeca nocentum  
 consilia! o semper timidum scelus! exit in unum

plebs ferro iurata caput: ceu castra subire  
 apparet aut celsum crebris impulsibus urbis  
 inclinare latus, densi sic agmine facto  
 quinquaginta altis funduntur in ordine portis.  
 —(2.482–94)

Nor is the ruler idle. He lacks not wit for crimes and heinous treachery. He urges trusty young men, bodies chosen for battle, now with gold, now with ardent persuasion, and viciously sets up a fight by night, desirous to violate by ambush and stealthy steel an ambassador, name sacred to peoples throughout the centuries—but what does royalty not hold cheap? What arts would he devise if Fortune gave him his brother? Blind counsels of the wicked! Crime cowardly ever! A populace goes forth sworn to arms against a single life. It was as if they were about to attack a camp or topple a city's high flank with repeated blows. So in close array fifty pour out in order from the lofty gates. Honor to your valor, you that are deemed worthy of such an armament!

Eteocles continues to act out of the desire to commit violence inspired by his grandfather's spectral blood: *legatum . . . inuadere . . . cupit*. He is prepared to kill a sacrosanct ambassador even though the death of Tydeus would make armed conflict with his brother inevitable. But he desires the war as much as he desires to kill Tydeus, and it will be worth whatever it costs, because a man who holds the life of a sacred ambassador cheap (*quid regnis non uile?*, echoing Tydeus's *uiles* just before at 2.458) will have little respect for ordinary lives. Cheap to him too are even the best bodies of the Theban youth (*lectissima bello/corpora*) whom he sends to their deaths against Tydeus. So is the money he pays the warriors (*pretio*) to carry out the ambush.

Eteocles' monetary inducement to his own soldiers exposes his mercantile nature: he buys the violence he desires. The death of Tydeus he seeks and the consequent catastrophic loss of Theban life is another act of mass consumption, but his first violent one in a progression marked by a vocabulary of wasteful expenditure. Just as Eteocles had "poured out" his own limbs in drunkenness (*fuderat . . . membra*, 2.91–92) and his grandfather's spirit poured its blood over him (*perfundit*, 2.124), so now he has the most precious of the Theban youth "poured" out of the Theban gates (*funduntur*) to be used up by Tydeus, who, as he later puts it, "drinks down their fifty souls" (*hausi/quinquaginta animas*, 8.666–67).

Later in the poem, just before the war begins, Tydeus once again speaks

with discernment of Eteocles' character. As Jocasta tries to persuade Polynices to negotiate with his brother, Tydeus intervenes to warn Polynices not to trust Eteocles, who has already proved treacherous. Tydeus says sardonically that he has already experienced the "warm hospitality" (*pulchris . . . hospitiiis*, 7.543–44) of Eteocles and admonishes Jocasta for her willingness to send her son Polynices to "this sort of commerce" (*haec . . . commercia*, 7.544). With these contrasting terms, Tydeus once again presents Eteocles as someone who, so far from taking part in the properly aristocratic reciprocal practice of *hospitium*, distorts it into a kind of mercantile, commercial activity, namely one that involves perpetrating violence for his own narrow self-interest. Tydeus's characterization also links Eteocles with the figure of the Sphinx. Tydeus speaks here of being ambushed by the Thebans, an ambush that took place below the Sphinx's aerie, using similar language to that which described the Sphinx herself. The Sphinx provides a perverse kind of hospitality (*hospes*, 2.511) by engaging passers-by in deadly commerce (*commercia*, 2.512) to fill her "insatiable belly" (*inexpletam aluum*, 2.518). The implicit comparison highlights Eteocles' practice of using mercantile calculation to satisfy his desires for power and violence.<sup>27</sup>

Once the war begins and several leaders on the Argive side have been killed, Eteocles declares to his troops that he nearly has the "profit" from the war "in his hands" (*in manibus merces*, 10.29). Both the common people and the nobles use the language of mercantile exchange and gross consumption to criticize Eteocles. After the Thebans sleeping outside the city walls have been slaughtered and the Argives have the city on the defensive, the Theban crowd ceases to fear its king (*periiit reuerentia regis/sollicitis*, 10.583–84), raises up its voice to oppose continued fighting, and demands that Polynices be allowed to return and take power:

ueniat pactumque hic computet annum,  
Cadmeosque lares exul patriasque salutet  
infelix tenebras; cur autem ego sanguine fraudes  
et periura luam regalis crimina noxae?  
—(10.584–87)

"Let him come back, let him calculate here the year agreed. Let the unhappy exile salute his Cadmean home and his father's darkness.

27. Tydeus's implicit use of the Sphinx to describe the character of Eteocles has a certain irony, given his own similarities with the Sphinx, discussed in the previous chapter.

Why should I pay with my blood for fraud and perjurious crime of royal guilt?"

Pluto used the phrase *computat annum* earlier to refer to Ceres reckoning the alternating life and death of her daughter, Persephone, above ground and below (8.64). The Theban crowd invites the return of Polynices to do the opposite, anticipating that he, unlike Eteocles, will reckon up only his time in rule (*computat annum*), not their own lives. If Eteocles remains, the Thebans know that they will be required to pay with their blood (*sanguine . . . luam*) for his pleasures.

Creon later levels similar charges against Eteocles in a fit of rage over the death of his son Menoeceus:

sat tua non aequis luimus periuria divis.  
urbem armis opibusque grauem et modo ciuibus artam,  
ceu caelo deiecta lues inimicaue tellus,  
hausisti, uacuamque tamen sublimis obumbras?  
—(11.272–75)

Enough atonement have we paid to the unfriendly gods for your perjuries. This city, laden once with arms and wealth and lately thronged with citizens, you have drunk down, like a plague sent down from the sky or a hostile earth. Will you still let your shadow tower aloft over its emptiness?

Creon declares that the Thebans have “paid enough” (*sat . . . luimus*) to the angry gods for Eteocles’ false oath. By spending their lives, Eteocles has been consuming on a massive scale: he has swallowed down (*hausisti*) the whole city of Thebes, packed as it was with wealth and citizens. Eteocles has grown larger (*sublimis*) with his consumption of lives, while leaving the city empty (*uacuam*), but this consumption must end because they and he have had enough (*sat*). Eteocles’ figurative consumption of Thebes recalls Juno’s destruction of Troy in the *Aeneid*, described in similar terms (*Phrygum exedissee nefandis/urbem odiis*, 5.785–86). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Statius suggests that Jupiter has an appetitive desire for mass slaughter similar to that of Vergil’s Juno, although he is less discriminating about his victims. Thus Eteocles, as king of Thebes, wantonly looses upon his subjects the sort of destruction in which the king of heaven delights. But the people now desire that Eteocles pay with his own life rather than theirs (*hi te ire uolunt, hi pendere poenas*, 11.293).

An etymological pun in Creon's speech contributes to the sense that the Thebans are paying dearly with lives that Eteocles holds cheaply. Creon compares the calamity Eteocles causes to a plague, *lues*. The word *lues* resembles the word *luimus*, which stands in the same metrical position two lines above it. The words may be etymologically related, with *lues* signifying that mortals "are paying" (*luo*).<sup>28</sup> Statius certainly seems to be playing on this idea. If plague is one agent with which the gods were "paid" in human lives and suffering, Eteocles is another.

In his anger, Creon sarcastically offers to send his sole remaining son, Haemon, into battle. He taunts Eteocles by suggesting that he would gladly watch from the safety of a tower as Haemon, another potential rival for the throne, risked his life against the Argives (*ille iube subeat, tuque hinc spectator ab alta/turre sede*, 11.291–92).<sup>29</sup> Creon knows that Eteocles would take satisfaction in demonstrating and consolidating his power in this way while enjoying a violent spectacle.<sup>30</sup> Although Eteocles cannot publicly refuse Creon's demand that he face his brother, he dismisses Creon's criticism as a treacherous bid for power. He accuses Creon of mourning ostentatiously in order to stir up hatred against him and drive him to death at the hands of Polynices so that Creon himself may rule Thebes (11.297–304). But when Eteocles threatens to return from the duel to punish Creon, his words confirm that he takes a calculated pleasure in expending lives. As he goes out to face Polynices, Eteocles tells Creon that he should "profit from rage" and that Creon will "pay everything back" to him when he is victorious (*lucrare furorem: / uictori mihi cuncta lues*, 11.307–8). The phrase *lucrare furorem* has been interpreted to mean either that Creon should take momentary advantage of Eteocles' rage to fight his brother or that Creon should indulge his own rage while he can. Under either interpretation, Eteocles reveals his own way of thinking by attribut-

28. OLD s.v. *lues* offers this possibility, but without assurance. The ancient etymologies cited in TLL take *lues* as derived from λῦειν and its sense of dissolving.

29. Lovatt 1999, 131, notes that Statius's emphasis on the viewing of wounded and dead bodies implicates his audience as spectators.

30. The image of Eteocles watching the battle from on high likens him to Jupiter, who in Book 7 eagerly anticipates viewing the carnage of the war (7.22–25). Now that Jupiter has grown weary of the spectacle and left the scene of the duel, Eteocles could fittingly take his place, standing in the tower just below the spot where the gods stood to witness Capaneus's assault on the heavens (*supra fastigia turris*, 10.921). The Thebans share the *mens* of Eteocles: the army and ancestral spirits evince a perversely strong desire to watch the final duel between the brothers (11.420–23, 498). On spectatorship in Book 11 and the *Thebaid* more generally, see Bernstein 2004. He suggests (p. 72) that Creon represents Eteocles as the typically passive and feminized observer of a *teichoscopia* scene.

ing it to Creon. As Eteocles sees it, he will temporarily allow Creon to derive satisfaction from the spectacle of his own fight against his brother—temporarily, because Eteocles expects, or at least boasts, that he will come back as the victor. When he does, whatever profits Creon has managed to accumulate he will pay to Eteocles, and there can be no doubt that Eteocles means for the bulk of this payment to consist of Creon's life.

In sum, Statius gives Eteocles features of the typical tyrant, including violence, cruelty, and arrogance, but he is particularly interested in exploring the homology between physical appetites and the pursuit of power. Like Jupiter, Eteocles uses mercantile calculation to produce suffering for his own satisfaction: he is truly *uiolentus*, as Tydeus alleges. Eteocles takes a visceral pleasure in violence not only as a demonstration of his control of Thebes, but also as a sign of his progress toward the sort of uncontested domination Jupiter already holds. He pours out, drinks, and devours lives and resources with an urge for unchecked power that ignores the claims of others and generates a tremendous waste of blood and lives. Throughout, Eteocles directs this drive with a culpable and self-serving calculation.

### Polynices the Prodigal

Unlike his brother, Polynices shows a certain self-awareness and so demonstrates considerably more concern for those around him,<sup>31</sup> ultimately acknowledging and rejecting his own consumption and spending of lives. From the very beginning of the poem, Statius shows that Polynices neither desires nor calculates in violence in the same way that his brother does. Rather, he harms himself and others out of a shortsighted pursuit of power:

iam iamque animis male debita regna  
 concipit, et longum signis cunctantibus annum  
 stare gemit. tenet una dies noctesque recursans  
 cura uirum, si quando humilem decedere regno  
 germanum et semet Thebis opibusque potitum  
 cerneret; hac aeuum cupiat pro luce pacisci.  
 nunc queritur ceu tarda fugae dispendia, sed mox

31. Ahl 1986, 2885: "Dimly Polynices begins to realize, as the epic proceeds, that his obsession with power is distorting his perception of other aspects of life, and destroying everything around him. But his recognition never burgeons fully. It does not stop him plunging down the path of self-destruction."



attollit flatus ducis et sedisse superbus  
 deiecto iam fratre putat: spes anxia mentem  
 extrahit et longo consumit gaudia uoto.  
 —(1.314–23)

Already his mind envisages the royalty overdue and groans at the long year's halt and the loitering of the constellations. One thought obsesses him day and night, ever recurring: would he one day see his brother humbly leave the throne and himself in possession of Thebes and its wealth? For that day he would willingly barter a lifetime. One moment he complains of the dragging stretch of exile, but then he hoists princely pride and fancies he sits haughty, his brother already cast down. Torturing hope drags out his soul and in prolonged desire exhausts his joy.

Polynices broods on the kingdom of Thebes owed (*debita*) to him and shows that he has no less a taste for riches than his brother when he fantasizes about controlling Thebes and its wealth (*opibus*).<sup>32</sup> But Polynices dif-

32. At the beginning of the poem, Statius represents Thebes as a poor city (*paupere regno*, 1.151). Moisy 1971, 17–19; Bonds 1985, 233; Ahl 1986, 2827, 2873; D'Espèrey 1999, 37–38; and Bernstein 2004, 73, all take this representation as definitive, when in fact Statius is not consistent on this point throughout, but seems initially to emphasize the poverty of Thebes in an attempt to outdo Lucan's proem. Statius's opening words, *fraternas acies* (1.1), echo Lucan's *cognatas acies* (1.4). Statius implicitly argues that his war between relatives is more severe than Lucan's because the Theban brothers shed blood over power alone, without the added incentive of wealth. To assert his superiority, Statius borrows Lucan's own gesture, for Lucan laments the tradition of civil strife at Rome that began with Romulus and Remus fighting to the death to rule a few outcasts (*exiguum dominos commisit asylum*, 1.97). Once Statius moves beyond this point of conspicuous poetic emulation, he represents Thebes as prosperous. In addition to the mention of the wealth (*opibus*) of Thebes in the passage cited here, Tydeus describes Eteocles as sitting on the Theban throne, rich in gold and purple (*ostro diues et auro/conspicuus*, 7.406–7). We might suspect Tydeus of exaggerating the wealth of Eteocles to make the plight of the disenfranchised Polynices seem all the more pitiful, except that it would be absurd for Tydeus to claim before the assembled Theban court that Eteocles was sitting before them in splendor if he was not. Eteocles reclines on precious Assyrian coverlets (2.90–92) and wears opulent regalia (11.396–400). Creon later accuses Eteocles of having drained Thebes of the considerable arms and possessions with which it was once laden (*urbem armis opibusque grauem . . . hausisti*, 11.273–75, which supports the reading of *opibus* at 1.318 as “wealth”). Here too it would be absurd and rhetorically ineffective for Creon to level such a charge had the city not once been rich. The point of Statius's representation of Thebes as prosperous after the poem's opening lies in this last quotation: Eteocles is said to squander vast, not meager resources. As for Polynices, it may well be that the city of Argos, which he stands to inherit (along with Tydeus), is richer than Thebes; Eteocles implies as much while exaggerating Theban poverty (2.430–39). But Polynices can always want more, even if he does not seek the kingship of Thebes out of greed.

fers from his brother in that he thinks of spending only his own life, not the lives of others, to gain control of Thebes: *hac aeuum cupiat pro luce pacisci*. Polynices longs for power but has a naive vision of how he will obtain it. His words echo those of Vergil's Euryalus, who also professes a willingness to trade his life for a form of honor:

est hic, est animus lucis contemptor et istum  
qui uita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem.  
—(*Aen.* 9.205–6)

Here is a spirit which disdains the light of this earth and which believes that the honor after which you strive is cheaply bought even if it comes at the price of my life.

In adapting this passage, Statius uses Vergil's word *lux*, introduces variation with *aeuum* for Vergil's *animus*, and substitutes the financial notion of striking a contract (*pacisci*) for buying (*emi*).<sup>33</sup> In the *Aeneid*, the young Euryalus thinks nobly, but foolishly, of giving up only his own life in order to buy the honor that he covets. As we saw in chapter 1, Euryalus's desire for honor leads him to a greed for spoils that causes not only his own death but also that of his companion Nisus, the failure of their mission to Aeneas, and the consequent loss of Trojan life before Aeneas can arrive. The Vergilian parallel suggests that Statius's Polynices is just as foolhardy in considering only how his quest for power will affect himself.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the financial sense of the word *pacisci* applied to Polynices (with its reference to Euryalus's *emi*) invites us to contrast Polynices' desire to contract away only his own life with the willingness of his brother Eteocles to freely spend the lives of others.

This distinction is rooted in the further difference that Polynices

33. OLD s.v. *paciscor*, 2.

34. Statius parallels Euryalus's words even more closely in his version of the tale of Nisus and Euryalus, which involves the characters Dymas and Hopleus. When Dymas begs that his slain companion Hopleus be granted burial, his Theban captors agree on the condition that Dymas reveal information about the Argive army. Dymas rejects their offer, telling them that he will not buy the burial of Hopleus at such a cost, nor would Hopleus want him to (*nil emimus tanti, nec sic uelit ipse cremari*, 10.438). The effect of the Vergilian reminiscence here is the opposite of the effect in the description of Polynices. Dymas agrees to bargain his life not as a rash youth setting out on adventure, but as an experienced warrior accepting imminent death. Whereas the honor Euryalus gains costs more than one life, Dymas at this point successfully gives just his one life to save the honor of his companion and himself and thereby safeguards rather than endangers his army. The figure of Polynices contrasts similarly with Dymas through their common reference to Vergil's Euryalus.

does not desire violence as his brother does but becomes involved in it through his heedless pursuit of the throne. Although Polynices laments the gradual loss his exile represents (*tarda fugae dispendia*), the narrator suggests that by longing for Thebes he has already begun to waste the real delights he could possess: *longo consumit gaudia uoto*.<sup>35</sup> His plight at this moment as a wandering exile offers few delights, but by thinking only of regaining Thebes he will squander the opportunities for satisfaction that he does find: a happy marriage, status, and a comfortable life at Argos.

By thus undervaluing what he already possesses, Polynices helps to initiate a devastating war with his brother. It takes the death of his close companion Tydeus for him to realize the full significance of this fact. A rumor brings Polynices word of the "great loss" (*maxima . . . damna*, 9.34–35), and he asks aloud if he has really repaid the loyalty of his friend (*haec praemia digna rependi?*, 9.50) by bringing about Tydeus's death before the walls of Thebes. He then continues his lament:

nec iam sortitus ueteres regnique nocentis  
periurum diadema peto: quo gaudia tanti  
empta mihi aut sceptrum quod non tua dextera tradet?  
ite, uiri, solumque fero me linquite fratri:  
nil opus arma ultra temptare et perdere mortes;  
ite, precor, quid iam dabit mihi denique maius?  
Tydea consumpsi! quam hoc ego morte piabo?  
—(9.54–60)

I no longer seek the old lottery and the perjured crown of a guilty royalty. What do I care for joys so dearly bought or a scepter that your hand will not deliver? Go, warriors, and leave me alone to my savage brother. No need to try arms further and waste deaths. Go, I pray. What greater thing are you now to give me? I have expended Tydeus. With what death shall I atone for this?

35. Scholars differ on how to interpret this use of the word *consumo*, much as they do on other instances of the word in the *Thebaid*. Against those who read *consumit gaudia* as meaning that Polynices is enjoying in advance the pleasant thought of rule (Heuvel 1932 ad loc. and Mozley in his translation), Caviglia 1973 ad loc. rightly notes that the proximity of the phrases *spes anxia* and *longo uoto* indicate a negative connotation for *consumit*, and Shackleton Bailey follows this suggestion in his translation. These two interpreters thus interpret *gaudia* as the joy of rule that Polynices destroys by anticipating it too eagerly. But the phrase *consumit gaudia* also foreshadows Polynices' tendency to waste the good things he has at hand.

Polynices realizes that he has spent not just the pleasures of his home (the narrator's earlier *consumit gaudia*)—he has thoughtlessly attempted to buy his satisfaction at the cost of the lives of others (*gaudia tanti emptā*). With his exclamation *Tydea consumpsi!*, Polynices acknowledges that he has destroyed yet another *gaudium* in the form of his good friend. In a complete and belated rejection of calculation in violence and the commensurability of lives, he now abandons the idea of bartering his own life (*quanam hoc ego morte piabo!*). His new resolution even briefly expands beyond consideration of his own life and the lives of his close friends. Knowing what he now knows, Polynices says that there is no longer any use in “wasting deaths” in this war (*nil opus . . . perdere mortes*), acknowledging that he had implicitly come to value the lives of those around him not for how they could be lived, but only as currency to be expended.

Ironically, Polynices rejects the consumption of lives in response to the loss of a friend who was himself the most avid consumer. Polynices' exclamation *Tydea consumpsi!* recalls Tydeus eating the head of Melanippus (8.751–66),<sup>36</sup> but the word *consumpsi* also has strong financial connotations.<sup>37</sup> Statius draws together both the violent and the financial meanings of *consumo* here to develop a contrast between Polynices' use of violence and that of his friend. Tydeus consumes—through his “drinking down” of Theban lives and the devouring of Melanippus's head—from an appetite for the pleasures of violence. In contrast, Polynices shows no strong desire for violence but uses up lives, such as that of his friend Tydeus, as a consequence of his drive for power. Polynices consumes Tydeus by prompting him to take part in the war and so engaging his desire for violent consumption to the fullest, an engagement that ultimately costs Tydeus not only his life, but also the possibility of immortality. Polynices thus inadvertently spends Tydeus just as Tydeus accuses Eteocles of spending the Theban people.

Unfortunately, Polynices cannot translate his new understanding into action. After declaring that trading his own life would be useless, he nevertheless attempts suicide and is only restrained by his comrades and Adrastus (9.76–77). Adrastus's intervention has an ambivalent effect typical of his actions: although he prevents Polynices' suicide, he does so only by leading him back to his previous way of thinking with a *consolatio* on the changing fortunes of battle and the will of fate. Adrastus draws Polyn-

36. Ahl 1986, 2882.

37. Dewar 1991 ad 9.60 comments that “the metaphor is surely primarily financial” and notes that Statius “is fond of using *consumo* in unusual ways.”

ices away from the body of the friend who was so “dear” (*caro*, 7.79) to him, whose loss he had just declared incommensurable, and delivers him back into the waste of war, where Polynices loses his newfound appreciation for the value of lives.<sup>38</sup>

After the war has continued for some time, Polynices once again comes to believe in the futility of consuming and spending lives and so proposes to settle the conflict by a duel with his brother. Before he sets off, he explains to Adrastus that he regrets not having arranged the duel earlier:

tunc tempus erat, cum sanguis Achium  
integer, ire ultro propriamque capessere pugnam,  
non plebis Danaae florem regumque uerendas  
obiectare animas, ut lamentabile tantis  
urbibus induerem capiti decus. ast ea quando  
praeteriit uirtus, nunc saltem exsoluere fas sit  
quae merui.  
—(11.157–63)

Then was the time, when Achaean blood had not been broached, to advance of my own accord and fight my own battle; not to thrust forward the flower of the Danaan folk and the sacred lives of kings so that I might place a crown upon my head for so many cities to weep. But since the time for that valor has gone by, now at least let it be lawful for me to pay what I deserve.

38. This reversal is so complete that Polynices even allows the precious body of his friend, the sight of which had originally prompted his change of heart, to be lost to the enemy and subjected to further mutilation. Hippomedon takes up the task of defending Tydeus's corpse from the Thebans when they try to snatch it away, but they eventually seize it after Tisiphone tricks Hippomedon into rushing elsewhere. The Thebans who then stab Tydeus's body are compared to herdsmen who have caught and killed a marauding lion. They tug and pull at the lion's body, all the while recalling the “losses” (*damna*, 9.194) it has inflicted on their flocks (the *pecora* [“flocks”] that are their *pecunia* [“wealth”], an etymology recognized by Cicero [*tunc erat res in pecore et locorum possessionibus, ex quo pecuniosi et locupletes uocabantur*, *Rep.* 2.16]). The lion simile and the further mutilation of Tydeus's body it describes call attention to the fact that, after Polynices' reversion to his former way of thinking, violence is back in trade. Like herdsmen attacking a dead lion, the Thebans seek to make up for the great losses that Tydeus has inflicted by an act of mutilation that cannot affect the course of the war. Their retribution differs from the spending of the poem's chieftains, because the Thebans seek the satisfaction of violence in order to make up for a loss rather than to gain a surplus of pleasure and material goods.

Had he fought Eteocles sooner, Polynices says, he would not have “wasted” (*obiectare*) the lives of his companions in an attempt to gain control of Thebes. As it is, he declares that it is now time for him to at least “pay what he owes” (*exsoluere . . . quae merui*). As he continues his explanation, Polynices asks Adrastus if he should really continue to “drink down” whatever Argive blood remains and so “profit by” the Argives’ deaths:

anne bibam superest quodcumque cruoris  
Inachii et uestris etiamnum mortibus utar?  
—(11.173–74)

Or should I drink what is left of Inachian blood and still make use of  
your deaths?

Polynices now rebukes himself for fearing death and says that he will “re-pay” what he has done fittingly (*quis tantus pro luce timor? sed digna rependam*, 11.182). He calls upon all the relatives of those whose deaths he has caused, those whose joys he has taken (*quorum tot gaudia carpsi*, 11.184), to assemble and watch his duel.

At this moment before the duel, Polynices has returned to thinking of violence in economic terms, but with a difference. In the manner of a repentant prodigal, he now wants to settle his accounts (*rependam*), paying for what he has earned by losing, or at least risking, his own life. He realizes that he has failed in his reciprocal responsibilities as son-in-law to his father-in-law (*generi*, 11.164; *socer*, 11.163) and even as a former guest (*hospes*, 11.166). He knows that he was deluded when he earlier thought in terms of trading only his own life for the kingdom of Thebes, and he once again acknowledges that he was in effect attempting to “profit by” the expenditure of lives (*utar*) in a continuing act of massive consumption, which he will now cease (*anne bibam superest quodcumque cruoris*). Yet whereas Polynices earlier seemed to believe he could end the consumption of blood by renouncing the idea of exchanging lives, here he shows himself willing to bargain with at least his own life, which he is prepared to forfeit so he can pay for the other lives he has spent and prevent further conflict.<sup>39</sup>

Polynices’ professed desire to make restitution does not, however, square with the motives for the duel ascribed to him by the narrator, who

39. Udwin 1999, 46–78, examines the idea of an epic duel as part of an “economy of lives” meant to prevent further killing.

introduces Polynices' speech with the information that he has been roused to fury by Megaera:

cum uero Acherontis aperti  
 Dira ter admoto tetigit thoraca flagello,  
 ardet inops animi, nec tam considerare regno  
 quam scelus et caedem et perfossi in sanguine fratris  
 exspirare cupit, subitusque affatur Adrastum . . .  
 —(II.150–54)

But when the Fury of opened Acheron touched his corselet three times with her lash, he burns in helpless passion, eager not so much to settle on the throne as for crime and slaughter and death in the blood of his butchered brother. Of a sudden he spoke to Adrastus . . .

On this account too, Polynices desires to give up his life (*exspirare cupit*), but his wishes do not stop there: he burns to kill his brother as well. The discrepancy between Polynices' explanation and that of the narrator suggests that Polynices is concealing from Adrastus his ardent desire for blood and trying to persuade him to allow the duel by offering honorable reasons instead.

Here for the first time Polynices experiences a desire for violence itself, added to the desire for power he displays from the beginning of the poem. This new development marks the beginning of his return to identity with his brother.<sup>40</sup> On the plane of allegory, the change results from the intervention of Tisiphone, but on a psychological level, Polynices' spending of lives has left him too impoverished in mind (*inops animi*) to overcome a desire to kill and consume. This desire seems to be transferred to Polynices from his close companion and alter ego, Tydeus, at his death, although Polynices recoiled from it then, and in combination with his own capacity for treating lives as commodities the desire for violence renders him essentially equivalent to his brother. Polynices' own account of his motivations is not entirely misleading, however. He will trade his own life and demands the life of no one else but his brother; he is not compelled to the duel as Eteocles is. Given his previous words over the corpse of Tydeus, it seems reasonable to believe that Polynices genuinely wishes to pay those whom he has injured by risking his own death. But he cannot admit to

40. See Ganiban 2007, 190, on this transition more generally.

Adrastus that his desire to kill and consume also drives him to fight his brother without seeming to vitiate his more noble motivations.

When they meet, each brother kills and is killed, longing no more for power but only to extinguish the other's life. The narrator bids the now-identical dead brothers good riddance and ends his bitter farewell with a final reference to their consumption:

ite, truces animae, funestaque Tartara leto  
polluite et cunctas Erebi consumite poenas.  
—(11.574–75)

Go, fierce souls, pollute grisly Tartarus with your death and exhaust  
all the pains of Erebus.

*Consumite* is the last of the three plural imperatives pairing the brothers and indicating their equality by wishing them the same fate, a condign punishment in the underworld for their crimes on earth. Just as each has grossly consumed the blood and lives of others, although in very different ways, so now each should be forced to use up the tortures of hell by suffering them all.

### Creon

With the warring brothers dead, Creon accedes to the Theban throne, whereupon he is immediately transformed and begins governing ruthlessly.<sup>41</sup> Creon becomes no less an avid consumer of violence than Eteocles or Jupiter. In a lament for his dead son Menoeceus, Creon expresses regret that the corpses of the two sons of Oedipus will eventually decompose and fervently wishes that he could instead reanimate their bodies to see them eaten alive by wild animals:

longos utinam addere sensus  
corporibus caeloque animas Ereboque nocentes  
pellere fas, ipsumque feras, ipsum unca uolucrum  
ora sequi atque artus regum monstrare nefandos!  
ei mihi, quod positos humus alma diesque resoluet!  
—(12.95–99)

41. Dominik 1994, 60; D'Espèrey 1999, 74; and Ganiban 2007, 197–99.



Would it were given me to add long sensation to their bodies and drive their guilty souls from heaven and Erebus, and myself to seek wild beasts and hooked beaks of birds and show them the accursed limbs of the kings! Alas that kindly soil and time shall resolve them where they lie!

The depth of Creon's reversal is shown by the fact that he himself earlier reproached Eteocles for a desire to witness the carnage of battle.<sup>42</sup> Creon's exclamation interrupts his pronouncement of an edict prohibiting burial of the Argive dead, which he then continues:

quare iterum repetens iterumque edico: suprema  
ne quis ope et flammis ausit iuuisse Pelasgos;  
aut nece facta luet numeroque explebit adempta  
corpora.  
—(12.100–103)

So again I repeat it, again I announce: Let none dare to give succor to the Pelasgi with aiding flames! Else shall he pay for the deed with his death and fill up the number of used-up bodies with his own.

Whereas Eteocles supplies his desire to consume violence on a grand scale by producing a war, Creon must initially satisfy himself in the manner of Lucan's Caesar, with the spectacle of corpses.<sup>43</sup> He threatens that anyone who tries to bury one of these bodies, Theban or Argive, will "pay with his/her own death" (*nece facta luet*) and so "fill up the tally for the bodies that have been lost" (*numero explebit adempta/corpora*). Whereas Jupiter and Eteocles reckon up the violence they can produce, Creon keeps close count of the dead bodies on display.

Creon's edict leads to his own death once Theseus comes as an avenger, but not before the new fighting he provokes allows him to add to his tally: even with the return of war, Creon persists in collecting corpses. The narrator suggests as much when he describes Creon's choice for the field of battle against Theseus:

42. 11.291–92, considered in the discussion of Eteocles above.

43. Lovatt 1999, 135, observes that Creon's desire to observe the corpses exceeds even that of Lucan's Caesar, upon whom (as well as earlier versions of Creon) Statius's character is partly modeled. Lovatt sees this as a matter of competitive poetic escalation. Henderson 1998, 236–37, notes several passages where sight and violence are linked, beginning with Oedipus's putting out his own eyes and including other instances of blinding (n. 58).

hunc saltem miseris ductor Thebanus honorem  
 largitus Danais, quod non super ipsa iacentum  
 corpora belligeras acies Martemque secundum  
 miscuit, aut lacera ne quid de strage nefandus  
 perderet, eligitur saeuos potura cruores  
 terra rudis.  
 —(12.715–20)

This respect at least the Theban chieftain generously granted to the hapless Danaï, that he did not mingle the fighting armies in a second battle over the very bodies of the fallen; or else virgin earth is chosen to drink cruel blood lest the miscreant waste aught of mangled slaughter.

At first, when Creon chooses another battlefield for this new war against Theseus, he seems to “generously bestow” (*largitus*) upon the Argive dead the honor of not having their bodies trampled. But the narrator then offers a second alternative: rather than granting any honor to the Argives, Creon may simply not want to miss the chance (*perderet*) of adding to the total slaughter on view by burying the bodies from the first war under those of the second. This latter reason seems more likely because it accords with Creon’s earlier behavior; he merits the epithet *nefandus* given him by the narrator.

Statius achieves the alignment of Creon with Jupiter and Eteocles by reshaping his traditional character. In both Sophocles’ *Antigone* and Euripides’ *Phoenissae*, Creon requires only that Polynices, not Eteocles and the other Argives, remain unburied. In both tragedies, Creon is stern and forbidding (though more so in *Antigone* than *Phoenissae*), but he displays no inclination toward the sheer delight in violence he exhibits in the *Thebaid*. Instead, the Creon of Sophocles and Euripides seems motivated by a desire for revenge and the perceived need to make an example of those who defy his royal commands. Statius presents a far more tyrannical Creon who keeps the curse of abused political power before our eyes after the demise of the brothers,<sup>44</sup> as well as the problem of destructive consumption.

### The Flavians

Creon is one among several kings in the *Thebaid*, divine and mortal, who adopt a decidedly mercantile perspective that combines a strong appetite

44. Burck 1979, 333. In this respect, the readings of Dominik and D’Espèrey cited above agree with that of Burck.

for violence with shrewd calculation. As it happens, contemporary biographers documented similar features in the Flavian emperor Vespasian, and particularly his son Domitian, under whom Statius brought his epic to completion. Both were known for their close attention to financial matters, such that Vespasian was accused of avarice and Domitian of rapacity, as well as cruelty.<sup>45</sup> Suetonius writes that Domitian had a *callida saevitia*,<sup>46</sup> a clever savagery seen also in Statius's epic kings. Furthermore, the Flavians identified themselves closely with Jupiter,<sup>47</sup> who in the *Thebaid* shares a proclivity for brutal calculation with his Theban descendants. Scholars have discussed at length whether and how the *Thebaid* criticizes Domitian in particular.<sup>48</sup> Without entering into the details of this debate, from the preceding chapters we can safely conclude that Statius was meditating upon the same flaws in socioeconomic behavior that ancient historians found in the Flavians. If these historical accounts are at all reliable, then the *Thebaid* amounts to an implicit critique, if not open criticism, of the calculation and appetitive consumption of Vespasian and Domitian.

## Conclusions

In the *Thebaid*, lesser individuals are subject to the appetitive consumption of the powerful owing to the fragmentation of the traditional socioeconomic order. Characters acquire spoils in the manner of a Homeric

45. Suet. *Vesp.* 16, 23. See further Griffin 2000a, 2, 26–32. Literary and numismatic evidence shows that once Domitian was in power “the economy was his special concern,” such that he became “involved in the minutiae of the administration of the mint” (Jones 1992, 72, 76). Suet. *Dom.* 11, 12.

46. *erat autem non solum magnae, sed etiam callidae inopinataeque saevitiae*, Suet. *Dom.* 11.

47. Fears 1981.

48. Among those who see significant negative parallels between Domitian and Jupiter are Schubert 1984, 130–31; Ahl 1986, 2819–20, 2832–35, 2876; McGuire 1989; Henderson 1993, 166, 218–19; Dominik 1994, 130–80; and Criado 2000, 141–230. However, Rieks 1967, 224, views Domitian as positively associated with Theseus, who represents his policy of renewal. Hardie 1993a, 68, writes that “there is no obligation to believe that the angry tyrants of Statius . . . are intended as critical of Domitian.” D’Espèrey 1999, 18–21, finds Dominik’s approach unconvincing and argues that the poem’s myth itself is the main conveyor of meaning. Hill 1996b, 52–53, argues that the incompetent Jupiter makes Domitian look good by comparison, especially because he is assimilated to a virtuous Theseus. Braund 1996 sees the implicit comparison with Domitian as similarly flattering. Cf. Vessey 1973, 90–91, and Ripoll 1998, 425–51. McNelis 2007, 176, sees the poem as equal parts criticism and approbation of Flavian rule. For overviews of these positions and further bibliography see Braund 1996, 16–18; Criado 2000, 3–17 and 231–34; and McNelis 2007, 2–3 nn. 7 and 10. For a recent treatment that accepts the validity of much of the biographers’ criticism of the Flavians, see Griffin 2000a. Jones 1992 expresses a more favorable view of Domitian overall.

heroic economy, but these acquisitions are disconnected from the status competition at the heart of such a system. Adrastus acts with traditional aristocratic reciprocity, but his gestures of reconciliation are overcome by war, just as the brief revival of *pietas* and *hospitium* at the close of the poem gives way to mourning. Tydeus and Theseus briefly harness excessive desires for personal consumption, but ultimately unleash them with the consequence of wider destruction, while Polynices causes equal harm through the heedless pursuit of the Theban throne. The powerful representatives of the line of divine and Theban kingship, Jupiter, Eteocles, and Creon, act on similar desires, but in a mercantile fashion that further vitiates their goals. In Roman terms, this is a desolate world. Without reciprocal ties to restrain the ravages of the powerful, men and women can only find individual consolation in new, personal notions of *pietas* and *clementia*.



## CONCLUSIONS

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This book explores the intersection of two ancient discourses on social values. Homer provided the dominant poetic precedent for the socioeconomic systems of Latin epic; Roman aristocratic mores shaped how our poets and the primary audiences would have understood such systems. Both discourses endorse the sort of reciprocal mechanisms posited by modern scholars as originating in the prehistoric period that allowed community members to cooperate with one another and engage in trade with other peoples.<sup>1</sup> In the more advanced societies of Greco-Roman antiquity, reciprocity became an element of social stratification. Members of dominant groups could afford to give greater benefactions and leave unspecified when they expected a return and how much it should be. Thus, as in the Homeric world, the practice of large-scale and conspicuous reciprocity came to bind members of the aristocratic class together with ties of allegiance and distinguish them from their social inferiors. Roman aristocrats turned this tendency into dogma, to the point of excluding commodity transactions from their range of ideologically acceptable behaviors. With this rigid outlook, they were likely to interpret vigorous commodity exchange not as an inferior part of a larger socioeconomic system, but as a threat to the operation and preeminence of their own sphere of exchange.

Such fears were realized at the end of the Republic, when patronage and gifts became mere bribes used to secure power. In Lucan's rhetorical autopsy, as soon as the Republic stood triumphant over other nations it was doomed by the hollowness of reciprocal values and an overwhelming drive for luxury. He tentatively envisions a reversion to an earlier stage of Roman society reminiscent of prehistoric periods when bands of hunter-

1. Seabright 2004, 55–57.

gatherers, not yet having evolved an instinct for reciprocity, began to practice very limited exchange with other groups.<sup>2</sup> Devolution to an economy of thoroughly independent Roman households is the best solution Lucan can find to the failed reciprocity of the Republic.

Vergil was composing in the immediate aftermath of this collapse, yet he presents a more positive socioeconomic picture than does Lucan. He constructs his epic world in a way that suggests a continued investment in the ideal of reciprocity, an investment that is perhaps not surprising for the only one of our three poets who actually lived during the Republic. The Golden Age imagery Vergil associates with Augustus implies that he may have believed the *princeps* could restore the republican socioeconomic system.<sup>3</sup> The poet nevertheless explores the limits of this system in the trials he sets for his epic protagonist. In his quest to return (to a new) home, Aeneas follows the path of Odysseus,<sup>4</sup> a figure known not only for his guile, but also for his unusual willingness to become involved in trade. Disguised as a stranger, Odysseus claims that he would have been home long ago had he not been gathering goods (*chrēmata*) and boasts that he knows more about gains (*kerdea*) than other mortals.<sup>5</sup> Aeneas hews to another ideal, preferring to attain his homeland through reciprocal negotiations, exchanging gifts and forming alliances wherever possible. Yet he cannot sustain his mission without some traffic in the commerce of war. Aeneas does not engage in buying or selling as Odysseus claims to do, but he becomes enmeshed in a web of commodity debts that require payment in lives rather than the exchange of *gratia* he prefers. Because Homer does not enforce a clear opposition between reciprocal and commodity exchange, Odysseus can take part in both economic modes and still remain the heroic center of his *nostos*. But Roman elite mores cannot condone a figure such as Homer's Odysseus. However honestly and deeply the Roman Vergil may probe the contradictions of his society's economic ideology, for him any compromise of reciprocal values must appear as a moral defeat.

If Vergil's epic represents the advocacy of a reciprocal ideal and Lucan's the dominance of the mercantile, then Statius's *Thebaid* brings to life a world in which reciprocal cooperation has given way to the harmful pur-

2. Seabright 2004, 58.

3. *Augustus Caesar, diui genus, aurea condet / saecula*, 6.792–93. Vergil refers to Augustus as the descendant of gods who will found a new Golden Age, though Thomas 2001, 40–55, contests this interpretation. On Vergil's Golden Age as a time of ideal reciprocity, see Bowditch 2001, 132–35.

4. A parallel explored most deeply by Cairns 1989.

5. *Od.* 19.282–86. See von Reden 1995, 58–74.

suit of individual satisfaction. The loss of functional reciprocity means that no ties exist to restrain individuals from seeking their own self-interest at the expense of the larger society, their own class, or even their own families. As the major characters of the poem struggle for power amid the ruins of Homeric and Roman values, the powerless, lacking reciprocal ties to fall back upon, can respond to this aggression only with acts of separation. Various figures take flight and seek shelter, from Hypsipyle, to the goddess Pietas, to the Argive women who come to Athens. As victims flee sites of conflict, they also turn inward to new personal forms of *pietas* and *clementia*. In response to the failure of reciprocal values, Statius, like Lucan, has imagined a retreat, but not one dependent upon geographical or political repositioning. His refuge is universally accessible because, like the altar of Clementia, it requires no wealth or possessions, nor does it even depend upon physical space. Statius implicitly and intuitively furthers the claim of the Hellenistic philosophical schools that human beings can attain self-sufficiency with his vision of *pietas* and *clementia* fully realized by individuals. These values traditionally governed interpersonal exchanges, but Statius offers the possibility that the individual, through devotion or self-consolation, can exercise something like these relationships within the mind and so achieve their benefits when true reciprocity with others is impossible. For a poet living in a time of confused socioeconomic values, struggling to find patronage, occasionally seeking pay for his work, and witnessing the increasing legitimization of earned wealth, the potential for such independence must have seemed attractive. By animating new conceptions of self-sufficiency, he might provide some consolation to himself and others likewise subject to the appetites of the powerful.

Statius's representation of the socioeconomic order is in part a reversion to Homeric precedent. Vergil endows his epic with greater moralism than does Homer by privileging reciprocity; Lucan expresses frustration at the failure of the republican socioeconomic system and searches for political alternatives. Statius demonstrates the evils of self-indulgence and mercantile behavior, but, like Homer, he refrains from giving a strong tacit endorsement to any particular socioeconomic arrangement, in part through his choice to set his epic in the mythical past. In the end, however, Statius returns to Homer to further develop the Roman epic tradition. Like Vergil and Lucan, Statius uses epic to represent socioeconomic affairs in crisis. But rather than offering images of a viable sociopolitical order, Statius suggests that the benefits of exchange relations can be realized unassailably, if not fully, only within the human mind itself.



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